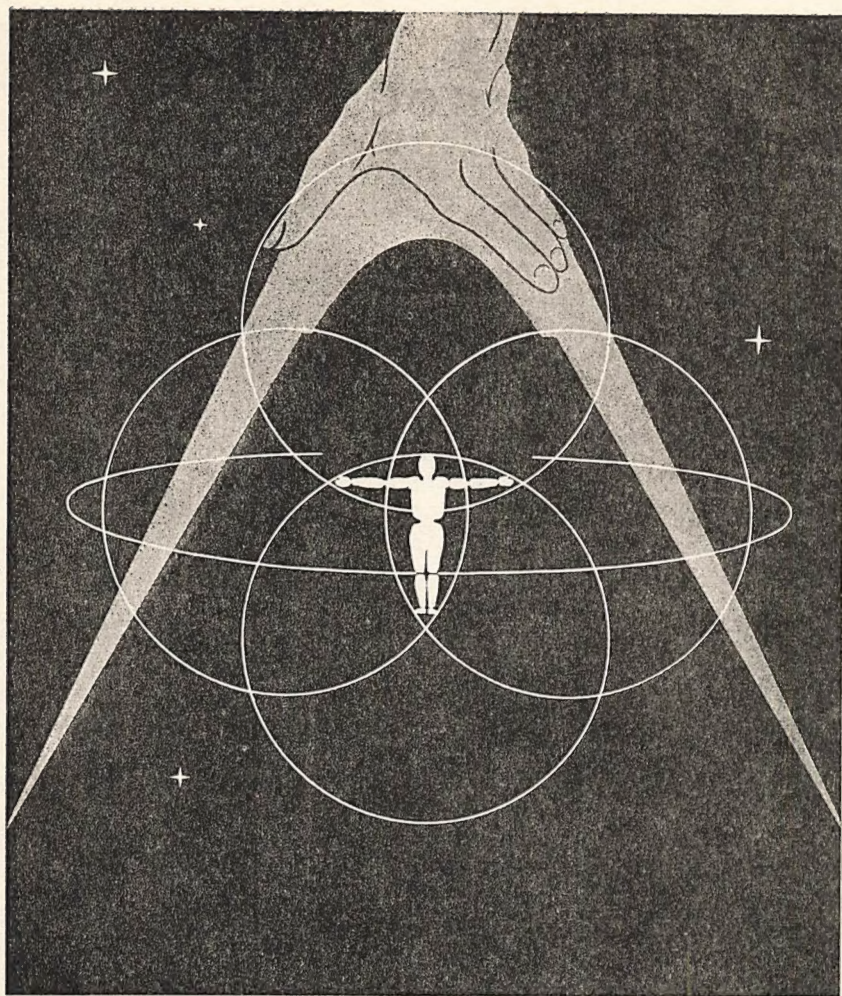


IN PERILOUS PATHS



Inspired by William Blake's picture of the "Ancient of Days", stretching down towards Creation with an architect's compasses in his hand, the design symbolizes the Creator's cosmic plan within which the whole drama of Man takes shape. Man lies across the intersection of many spheres of being, natural and supra-natural, body and soul, and all the web of relatedness in family, tribe and culture. This fact of Man's inescapable involvement is the key to the understanding of human nature. These pages trace the way in which his involvement determines the effect of his sin, the manner of his salvation and the nature of his calling in the modern world.

IN PERILOUS
" *Man in the midst.*
BT
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1957
PATHS

JOHN TAYLOR
"



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CONTENTS

I. MAN ON THE FRONTIER	<i>page 7</i>
II. THE BUNDLE OF LIFE	17
III. PROMETHEUS BOUND	29
IV. BEHOLD THE MAN!	42
V. A MAN IN CHRIST	55
VI. INTO ALL THE WORLD	67
INDEX	83

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I

MAN ON THE FRONTIER

“IT all depends, doesn’t it, not so much on what one thinks that men can do, as what one believes that a man is?”¹

The question occurs at the end of a discussion which Mr. Charles Morgan recounts as having taken place between himself and an American nuclear physicist concerning the possibility of altering the structure of portions of a human brain so as to eliminate the existing personality and produce in its place a new entity determined by the will of the experimenter. The scientist foresaw a society wholly controlled by a council of hyper-intelligent planners to whose will the remainder of the race would render the untroubled and compliant obedience of automata. If, as appeared from the conversation, such surgical manipulation were no mere horror of science-fiction, but a possibility envisaged by serious investigators, then to Morgan it presented a prospect of evil far greater than the threat of atomic warfare; but the physicist shared none of these scruples. He was astute enough, however, to realize that the real point at issue was not scientific but theological: it all depends on what one believes that a man is.

It is surprising that after so many centuries of speculation Man should still find his own nature a subject for debate. Why should he who gave names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field falter over the definition of himself? He has called himself a political animal, a tool-making animal, a religious animal; more recently he has favoured social man, or economic man; and no doubt other fashions are yet to be proposed. But when we examine these names we find that what they are trying to

¹ *Liberties of the Mind*, Charles Morgan (Macmillan) p. 16.

define is not the whole of Man, but the quality by virtue of which he is different from all other creatures. Though the philosophers insist on seeing Man as just one more species in the infinite variety of nature, they are still forced back to Delilah's querulous interrogation, *Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth*. There is about Man some element of uniqueness which is not merely a superiority of degree, but a difference in kind.

*Know, man hath all which Nature hath, but more ;
And in that more lie all his hopes of good.*¹

If that is true then we can protest that any scientific meddling with a human personality, any reduction of Man's status to the level of other natural phenomena, is a sin against the race and against the Creator. But is it possible honestly to maintain the unique value of human personality? On the one hand Man's extraordinary intelligence, his power to bend the rest of nature to his ends, his strange quest for beauty in all its forms, his organization of society, his boundless enterprise and unremitting toil, seem to be indisputable evidence of his worth and lordship. With our eyes upon the rise and fall of the civilizations in all their splendour of art and science, with our ears open to the songs of Man's long pilgrimage and the tales of his incredible hopes and heroisms, with our spirits awed by the age-long offering of prayer and praise at many altars and in diverse shrines, we cannot doubt that he is the crown of creation and the masterpiece of God. But when we study Man's inhumanity to man, his chronicle of war and massacre, slavery and torture, we may question his boasted superiority to the rest of nature. When we look, not at the sages, but at the helot millions who make up the greater part of mankind, remembering that in China alone a million die monthly and the world seems not to miss them, we may agree with King Lear that "man's life is cheap as beast's". And if we dare to lift our eyes beyond the surface of this globe

¹ *To an Independent Preacher*, Matthew Arnold.

to the hundred thousand million galaxies of the universe we are struck speechless at our nothingness. "We may be sure," wrote Professor Macneile Dixon, "that for every human being in the world there is not one star apiece—there are ten thousand. Viewed from the bodily angle, no comparisons can express the insignificance of man among the cosmic magnitudes."¹

The classic expression of this dilemma of the human situation is found in *Psalm* viii. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained: what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" On the one hand is Man's unimportance, weakness, transience. The Bible is never blind to these facts. Indeed the scriptures are more robustly honest than many Christians dare to be. They do not endorse the defensive arguments of the believer who, scared of geological time, concluded that the fossils must have been put into the rocks by the Devil himself in order to confound the godly. The Hebrew writers faced the fact that Man, set within the framework of nature, is a thing of no account.

"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."²

And yet, while feeling Man's meanness and insignificance as acutely as any modern, the Hebrews remained equally true to the other, apparently contradictory, fact of their experience, namely that Man stands in a unique relationship to God. "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honour." Indeed, the bitterness of Man's transitoriness lay precisely in the knowledge that this "walking shadow" was precious to God. "O thou Watcher of men . . . now shall I lie down

¹ *The Human Situation*, W. Macneile Dixon (Edward Arnold) p. 155.

² *Isaiah* ii. 22; *Psalm* cxlvi. 4.

in the dust, and thou shalt seek me diligently, but I shall not be."¹ But generally this brief, insubstantial quality of individual life was seen to be no evil because each fragment is regarded in its relation to the whole. Man's significance lies not in himself but in his relationship to God and to the eternal Will of God. In this he is unique, that while, as a created thing, he remains the *object* of God's purposeful activity, yet he is distinct from the rest of creation in being granted some comprehension of that purpose, and in being called to co-operate, as a *subject*, in that divine activity. "As a creature Man is ranged with all other creatures; but now, as the one whom God's Word meets, he comes to God's side, and confronts the rest of creation. Man is not simply a piece of nature, however firmly interwoven his life is in the order of nature."²

Whence comes the power of this strange creature to transcend nature and himself, and observe both with detached and critical consciousness? The biblical answer is that God created Man in His own image. He had said, Let the *earth* put forth grass, Let the *waters* bring forth abundantly the moving creature, Let the *earth* bring forth the living creature after its kind; there was causation in this process, some inherent power of generation delegated to nature. But this was not enough for the making of Man. "God said, Let *us* make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion . . . And God created Man in his own image, in the image of God created he him."³ Let those who will, smile at the anthropomorphism of the second chapter of Genesis which pictures the Creator as a human craftsman; yet our more sophisticated metaphysics, for all their abstract correctitude, cannot convey half the wonder of the careful, cherishing love of God as He formed this little creature, and gave to it the power of a personal response to His own Person. At this point the children have the advantage of the wise and prudent, and the

¹ Job vii. 20, 21.

² *Man in the Old Testament*, Walther Eichrodt (S.C.M. Press) p. 30.

³ *Genesis* i. 26, 27.

picture-language of the Negro preacher comes nearest to the truth.

*Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled him down;
And there the great God Almighty,
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of his hand;
This Great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till he shaped it in his own image;
Then into it he blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.
Amen. Amen.¹*

The *Imago Dei* is the gift of personality which has the capacity for relationship. It is that quality which has been called "addressability", whereby God can confront Man with the word, Thou, and so confer on him the power to say Thou to God. The Image of God is the reflection of God in the mirror of a human person, and it was the restoration of this capacity to reflect to which St. Paul referred when he wrote: "We all with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit."²

Emil Brunner has shown how this responsive awareness towards God is the thing which distinguishes Man from the rest of nature. It is true that the whole of creation reflects in some degree the nature of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork."³

¹ *God's Trombones*, James Weldon Johnson (George Allen and Unwin) p. 25.

² *II Corinthians* iii. 18.

³ *Psalm* xix. 1.

But, says Brunner, "He desires from us an active and spontaneous response in our 'reflecting'. He who creates through the Word, who as Spirit creates in freedom, wills to have a 'reflex' which is more than a reflex, which is an answer to his Word, a free, spiritual act, a correspondence to his speaking." "He is the one who wills to have from me a free response to his love, a response which gives back love for love, a living echo, a living reflection of his glory."¹

It is in this ability to respond that our human "responsibility" consists. Inescapably Man, by his nature, must respond. Though he give the wrong answer, the power to answer is still his. The Image of God is not lost, though the reflection is hideously distorted.

How is this responsibility of Man manifested?

First in his awareness of his own creatureliness. God speaks, and at once Man knows himself to be a creature, infinitely less than God. Whenever God makes Himself known, Man's first reaction is to abhor himself in dust and ashes.² He knows that his rational powers, his mysterious individuality, even his sense of personal relationship with God, do not exempt him from the finitude, the dependence, and the passivity which is his lot as a creature belonging with the rest of nature. The true human response to this fact, the right answer, is that untroubled acceptance which Jesus taught and demonstrated. Man is a fellow creature with the lilies of the field and the birds of the heaven in his dependence on God's providence, but he is not to be disturbed or affronted by this fact. "Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious."³ The Heavenly Father knows, the human child stands, "with parted lips and outstretched hands", humbly trustful and expectant.

Secondly, Man's responsibility consists in his awareness of God's demand. He knows himself to be loved in a way that requires love, to be confronted by a Will that demands

¹ *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption*, Dogmatics Vol. 2, Emil Brunner (Lutterworth Press) pp. 55, 56.

² *Job* xlii. 5, 6.

³ *St. Matthew* vi. 25-34; cf. x. 19; xiii. 22; *St. Mark* viii. 16-21.

obedience. "The fundamental datum of Israel's view of life is that the individual is summoned to a responsibility which demands to be taken as absolute. The man to whom God's demand comes is recognized as a person, an *I*, who cannot be represented or replaced by any other."¹ "True individuality was seen to be grounded solely in the indivisible responsibility of each man to God."² God raises me out of the rest of nature and confers on me the crowning honour of personality by saying to me: "Thou shalt"; and to this I make my response, answering: "I ought". In that conversation lies the uniqueness of Man. Sun and moon may travel their predetermined courses, wind and storm be obedient to God's word, but these are under no such sense of obligation as Man. The greater apes do not wrestle with temptation; the mouse does not blame the hawk, nor the trout reproach the otter; the tapeworm never feels ashamed, nor does the cobra seek to make amends. Man alone knows what God would have him do and, when he will not do it, feels that he is judged.

Thirdly, Man's ability to respond is seen in his sense of a task and destiny arising out of his personal relationship with the Creator. Not only has he the strange power to transcend himself, to observe and assess and judge his being; not only is he open towards God, receptive to the pressures of God's love; but he is aware also of the rest of nature as a whole, and of his peculiar calling towards her. Miss Dorothy Sayers has pointed out that when we are told that Man was made in the image of God the only attribute which the narrative has ascribed to God is His creatorship. It is in the likeness of a Creator that Man has been made, so that while he stands towards God as a creature involved in the rest of nature, yet he stands over against nature as a fellow worker with God. "God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

¹ Walther Eichrodt, *op. cit.* p. 23.

² *The Body*, J. A. T. Robinson (S.C.M. Press) p. 15.

"And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it."¹

Though nature seems indifferent to right or wrong, untroubled by shame or scruple, the walls of her neutrality have been breached. In her midst is one who is her own child, yet who dares to weigh her in the balances and find her wanting. He recoils from her cruelties and is aghast at her destructiveness. Reflecting, as he must, the Creator's image, he finds himself impelled to repair, to heal, to harness and refine, wresting order out of chaos and wealth from the wilderness. It is a very ancient Christian belief that Man was indeed created to be the mediator between God and nature. Through Man as their priest all creatures bless the Lord, praise him and magnify him for ever. Through Man, made in the Creator's image, nature is to be brought to that perfection which is the Creator's will. And though we cannot plumb the mystery of the evil in the cosmos, we may believe that: "the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God", and that when Man shall at last learn to fulfil his own destiny, "the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."² "We must," wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer from his Nazi prison, "take our full responsibility for the moulding of history, whether it be as victors or vanquished. It is only by refusing to allow any event to deprive us of our responsibility for history, because we know that is a responsibility laid upon us by God, that we shall achieve a relation to the events of history far more fruitful than criticism or opportunism."³

It seems then that Man, being made in the image of God, found it his calling to stand athwart the very frontiers of Time and Eternity, humble in his dependence, yet glorious in his task, the mediator between nature and nature's God. So much hangs on this that before going forward we must hesitate again

¹ *Genesis* i. 26; ii. 15; cf. *Psalms* viii. 6-8; *James* iii. 7.

² *Romans* viii. 19-23.

³ *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (S.C.M. Press) p. 17.

to ask whether we dare hold such an estimate of Man against the bleak background of our modern cosmology. When we set the tiny span of Man's achievement at the end of the dreadful vistas of pre-history, it is difficult to claim that this "pilgrim of a day" is really of any significance to the rest of time. What manner of priests are we to offer worship on behalf of a universe "under the bombardment of whose dimensions and distances the spirit shrivels"?¹ Yet man *is* unique, if in nothing else at least in his propensity for examining and judging the rest of nature, a phenomenon which Science can neither dispense with nor account for. "The singularity," writes Professor Dixon, "lies here that man, the most trifling and ephemeral being, small dust in the scale, does what nature herself cannot do. He thinks. He admires, examines, reflects, and has even the audacity to criticize and disapprove."²

Can we then, after all, stand in the galleries of our museums and beneath the lenses of our observatories and believe that Man was made to be God's agent and fellow worker towards the rest of nature? T. S. Eliot says that the effect of popular astronomy upon him is only the insignificance of vast space.³ When first he saw a microscope Malebranche shrewdly exclaimed: *This is the end of size.*

We know that our bodies are composed of cells: nine billions of them in one inch of brain tissue, so small are they. Each one of these cells contains a world of globules, filaments, vesicles, whirling in ceaseless motion about the central nucleus. This nucleus consists of many chromosomes, and within the chromosomes of each human germ-cell lie the ultra-microscopic genes. In its inexpressible smallness each gene compared to a human body is as one man in the midst of the universe. Yet, we are told, the genes carry the features of our faces, the colour of our eyes and hair, our talents and temperaments and every quality which we inherit. If so

¹ W. Macneile Dixon, *op. cit.* p. 155.

² *Ibid.* p. 48.

³ *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, T. S. Eliot (Faber and Faber) p. 133.

small a thing can determine the microcosm of man, it is not unthinkable that Man should himself be the agent of the Creator's will towards the universe.

Only by learning our purpose can we understand our nature. Heirs of the earth and of time, yet open towards heaven and attuned to eternity, made of the dust yet made for God, we are creatures of the borderland, men of many worlds. We stand at the point of intersection of many planes; from this fact derives our destiny and our danger, our tensions and our tragedies. Not until we have comprehended the full height of the calling of God can we know the depth of the fall of Man. In other words we need to read the first part of Cardinal Newman's hymn *Praise to the Holiest*, before we can really grasp the meaning of the familiar second part. The angels sing of Man, who is "the younger son" compared with themselves, God's "elder race":

*The younger son He willed to be
A marvel in his birth:
Spirit and flesh his parents were;
His home was heaven and earth.*

*The Eternal blessed this child, and armed,
And sent him hence afar,
To serve as champion in the field
Of elemental war.*

*To be His Viceroy in the world
Of matter and of sense;
Upon the frontier, towards the foe,
A resolute defence.¹*

¹ *The Dream of Gerontius*, Cardinal Newman.

II

THE BUNDLE OF LIFE

THERE are certain hills and villages in the realm, beloved of tourists, where the boundaries of several counties converge. There one may meet farmers subject to three agricultural authorities, or find Gilbertian fun in rising from a Yorkshire bed and coming down to a Lancastrian breakfast. Human nature is in just such a situation. The bewilderment of Man consists in this, that within him so many planes of existence converge and intersect. We have seen that the necessity for this lies in the nature of his calling and destiny. We must now examine more thoroughly the different dimensions of his complex being.

The nature of Man considered vertically (the spatial terms are purely metaphorical, of course!) ranges from the animal level up to the spiritual level. He stands across the intersection of the natural and the supra-natural spheres. Viewed in another dimension, in horizontal section as it were, he is seen to be both body and soul. Body means Man's total self in its material manifestation; soul means Man's total self in its inward, invisible life.

It is important that we should not confuse these two dimensions of duality, nor suggest that body belongs more to the animal pole, and soul to the spiritual pole of Man's personality. Body and soul are parallel and interpenetrating along the whole range of Man's being; his soul is involved in his animal nature no less than his body; the body shares in his spiritual experience as well as the soul. Man battling with the elements, in the grip of sexual passion, or digging desperately for water, is not mere body: soul fights and desires as well. Man wrestling in prayer, burdened with guilt, or caught

up into ecstatic communion with God, is not pure soul: body, too, may share the agony, the sickness or the thrill. Observe that African peasant strumming his lyre as he sings at the fireside, or this English girl in the concert-hall, absorbed in a Brahms symphony: you cannot eliminate from their experiences soul or body, spirit or animal, for Man in his totality is involved. God made him so; and what God has joined let no one attempt to sunder.

The blasphemous attempt, alas, is all too often made. We have said that Man lies across the intersection of the natural and the supra-natural spheres. But there are philosophers who will not have it so. It is intolerable, they complain, for Man so to sit on the fence. He must be made to come down on one side or the other. The Idealists would set him on the higher side, the Naturalists on the lower; and between them they bid fair to dismember the corpse before they settle their dispute. "Is Man an ape or an angel?" asks Disraeli, and adds: "Now I am on the side of the angels." How that ape haunted the dreams of the nineteenth century! "Who," demands Tennyson

". . . can escape
From the lower world within him, moods of tiger or of ape?¹

and tries to assure himself that in the process of slow time Man may

*Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.*²

But the Christian does not seek to escape from any part of his nature, for God made it all and saw that it was good. The Bible, with honest humility, acknowledges Man's animal status: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth the beasts: as the one dieth so dieth the other; all are of the dust and all turn to dust again."³ This humble acceptance is the biblical attitude towards both the lowliness and the height

¹ *The Making of Man*, Tennyson. ² *In Memoriam* cxviii, Tennyson.

³ *Ecclesiastes* iii. 18-21; cf. *Psalms* xxxvi. 6; xlix. 12.

of Man's stature. God formed Man of the dust: then Man submits to his creaturehood with wonder. God made him little lower than the angels: Man accepts that gift also with humility. In Man, as in the universe, the natural creation groans and travails, growls and snarls sometimes, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. But the Christian knows that all the spheres which intersect within his being were made by God, and God is to be met in them all. "If I ascend up into the heaven of spiritual experience, Thou art there: if I make my bed in the sheol of my subconscious, behold, thou art there also."

Again, there are those who would disentangle soul from body, holding to the one and despising the other. Oriental faiths suggest that Man's real self is but a fragment of the divine, enmeshed in the evil of individuality and submerged into the misery of material existence, but struggling through successive purgations, and, maybe, incarnations, till at length it shall be blissfully reunited in the eternal One. "Men who love nothing in the world," taught Buddha, "are rich in joy and free from pain." The Greeks aggravated the problem for themselves by their passionate love of physical beauty which added a particularly sharp pang to their belief in the transience and evil of matter. To them Man was essentially a reasoning mind, a spark of the divine light; physical life, indeed the whole of nature, though it took on loveliness from the reason which indwelt it, was nevertheless only a prison of the reasoning soul. It is not surprising that when Christianity fell into the hands of some of the Greek thinkers it suffered a sea-change, so that the sinless Christ could not have had a real, material body, nor the heart of God ever be ruffled by any feeling. Even the ages of faith were infected by this virus, so that Christendom seemed more concerned with the pilgrimage of souls than with the restoration of the sons of God. What an astonishing tale is this history of Man's endeavour to separate soul from body! What deep horror of sex, what flagellation of the flesh, what strange asceticisms and morbid fancies, what monstrous cruelties and heartless neglect, has

Man visited upon himself and his brethren in the execution of this unnatural design!

But the Bible knows nothing of this divorce. In the thought of Israel "the body is the soul in its outward form."¹ Dr. Wheeler Robinson has said: "The Hebrew idea of the personality is an animated body, and not an incarnated soul."² The phrases "every soul" and "every body" are interchangeable, meaning simply "every person". The Bible teaches that the soul, like the blood, permeates the whole body, so that sometimes it is described as residing in the blood,³ and as poured out in death with the blood.⁴ It is significant that in Hebrew, as in many African languages also, the word for soul (Hebrew, *nephesh*) is also the word for life. Similarly, neither in Hebrew nor in Bantu speech are the dead referred to as souls, but as shadows, small and weak. For many centuries, indeed, the Hebrews were so convinced of the indissoluble union of soul and body that they could not believe that real life after death was possible, and in the end only won through to a certain hope of a future life by virtue of their faith in the resurrection of the body.⁵ In the New Testament also there is no scorning of the body, for had not the Word become flesh, and His body risen and ascended? Body, as well as soul, shares in the redemption,⁶ is to be presented to God as a thank-offering,⁷ to become the temple of the Holy Spirit,⁸ and to be included in the ultimate glory.⁹

There is yet a third dimension in which Man is seen to be straddling the intersection of many spheres. The human

¹ *Israel I*, J. Pedersen (Oxford University Press) p. 171.

² *The Old Testament. Its Making and Meaning*, H. Wheeler Robinson (University of London Press) p. 77.

³ *Genesis ix. 4; Leviticus xvii. 11 R.V.M.*

⁴ *Isaiah liii. 12; II Samuel xiv. 14; Psalm cxli. 8 R.V.M.*

⁵ *Psalm vi. 5; Isaiah xxxviii. 18; Psalm xvi. 10; Isaiah xxvi. 19; Daniel xii. 2, 3.*

⁶ *Romans viii. 23.*

⁷ *Romans, xii. 1.*

⁸ *I Corinthians, vi. 19, 20.*

⁹ *Philippians, iii. 21.*

personality is not confined within the complex of body-soul with animal-spirit, but only really exists in its inter-relation with other persons. "One man is no man," says L. Kohler in his *Theology of the Old Testament*. We do not find in the Bible as a whole any conception of individual man existing in or for himself. "The mutual relations of the individual with family, tribe and people are a part of the constitution of the self. . . 'No man is an island'. The individual lives in a web of relations that reach out to other men, and that reach back to those before him and forward to those that live after him. And these relations constitute in a real sense a considerable part of his identity and of his immortality."¹ If all life is meeting, then I am "myself in my relationships" or I am nothing at all.

But what, you may demand, of the hermits? Did they not find a wholeness in their lonely communion with God? Go to the desert for your answer. Seek out St. Anthony in the fastness of the Egyptian Fayum. You will find you are not journeying alone, for thousands travelled yearly from all quarters of the Empire in search of the spiritual clarity which a word from Anthony could bring them. It was for love of them that he sought the way of renunciation. It was he, the father of monasticism, who exclaimed: "My life and my death are in my neighbour".

We shall not, therefore, understand Man until we begin to think of him not in his individuality but in his involvement. This may be seen in many aspects:

1. First, Man is involved through his sexuality. We may smile at the missionary candidate who, asked by the interviewing board, "Are you unattached?" replied, "No, I'm male", but he spoke a thoroughly biblical truth. For the Bible no less than Freud reveals sexuality as the pivot of Man's being. The creation story says: "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." It seems to imply that the Image of God, Man's response-ability, consists in the fact of sex in the

¹ *The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society*, G. Ernest Wright (S.C.M. Press) p. 118 (*italics mine*).

human race. This is indeed the case. For sexuality is simply the essence, at the core of Man's being, of his incompleteness within himself, the driving urge which insists on his seeking completion in another. Man in his insufficiency must have the help-meet, that is, "a helper to correspond to him". In that correspondence he finds completion; two half-beings become one "flesh", one person.¹ "The social nature of the human individual is thus vividly clear, because by creation he is meant to adjust himself to the 'thou' of the opposite sex. He is incomplete in his individuality; 'it is not good that man should be alone'."² Sexuality is therefore the sacrament of man's involvement in others, and so of his involvement in God, who is the Lover and Husband of His creation.³

2. Again, Man is involved in his inter-dependence in society. "We are members one of another" is the law of human nature. Man, who is body-soul, shall not live by bread alone, but neither shall he live on ideas. His manhood becomes submerged in mere brute starvation and deprivation without adequate food and drink, clothing and shelter; yet for all these things we depend on one another. So the religion of the Bible is too realistic to deny the central contention of Marxism that man is an economic being who cannot develop as a person apart from his inter-relation with others in the mutual supply of the basic human needs. By one enactment after another the Mosaic law recognized the sacredness of right farming, marketing, trading, and responsible hygiene and health. The high-lights of the liturgical year were the great festivals, memorials of man's involvement both in agriculture and in history. The Peace of the People of God is shown to be the total well-being of the community, and each member attains his true self-hood only by sharing in the common purposes and contributing to the common life. We cannot contract out of our membership in humanity. Jeremiah's young disciple Baruch was given one short chapter all to

¹ *Genesis* ii. 18; *St. Mark* x. 6-8.

² G. Ernest Wright, *op. cit.* p. 50.

³ *Ephesians* v. 28-32; *Hosea* ii. 19, 20.

himself.¹ Knowing that the doom his master had prophesied was about to fall upon the unrepentant nation, he rather smugly supposed that he, as the prophet's right-hand man, should have enjoyed a private blessing, exempt from the national ruin. But with scathing indignation the Word of the Lord denounces Baruch's puny self-pity: "Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, and this in the whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not."

"If one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it."² We may remember John Donne's familiar words: "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee".³

3. Then there is Man's deep involvement in his society, history and culture. Professor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing to his parents from a Berlin prison during the last war, has movingly described this interpenetration of human individuals in friendship. "It makes one realize," he says, "how closely our lives are bound up with other people's, and in fact how our centre is outside ourselves and how little we are individuals. To say 'as though it were a part of me' is perfectly true, as I have often found after hearing that one of my colleagues or pupils has fallen. I think it is a literal fact of nature that human life extends far beyond our physical existence. Probably a mother feels this more than anybody."⁴

It is at this point that I should like to make those disclaimers and acknowledgments which usually appear in the preface to a book. Anyone who has read thus far will have realized that none of the thought in this book is original, and may have grown impatient to find so many people's ideas lying ill-digested in the text. Better writers are more adept, no doubt, at assimilating the aliment they receive from others, and the

¹ *Jeremiah* xlv.

² *I Corinthians* xii. 26.

³ *Devotions*, John Donne.

⁴ *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (S.C.M. Press) p. 50.

gastric juices of their minds leave not one footnote or inverted comma to tell the tale of their indebtedness. Yet not one of us has a mind of his own; we are what we devour.

*O, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the Nancy brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig.*

Our souls are bound in the bundle of the living.¹ We breathe the spirit of the age and think the thoughts of our own generation. We are moulded by our culture and have history in our veins. The Bible always sees nationality not as an incidental, but as an essential factor in each human being. It was the Most High who gave to the nations their inheritance and separated the children of men,² and even in the glory of the New Jerusalem the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.³ So, in the Holy Communion Service, it was not, as some have said, a failure of liturgical sense but the truest insight which led Cranmer to insert the prayer for the Sovereign with the Collect of the Day, for we who draw near to God to hear his Word cannot come in our individuality but only in our involvement in the particularities of our environment. Each of us is his nation and his history.

*A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's breathing English air.⁴*

4. Finally there is Man's biological involvement in the race. Each individual is linked intimately with his parents and his grandparents. It is no exaggeration to say that he consists of them. Even the insurance companies inquire of a man's forebears to learn his expectation of life. But the

¹ *I Samuel* xxv. 29 R.V.M. ² *Deuteronomy* xxxii. 8. ³ *Revelation* xxi. 24.

⁴ *The Soldier*, *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke* (Sidgwick and Jackson).

passing of the generations from our sight obscures from us our involvement, not only in parents and grandparents, but in all the generations that stretch back through the centuries. Seen from the standpoint of eternity mankind would appear as a single unbroken branching organism, which has been likened by one writer to a tree, by another to a lava-flow. Every man is in All Man, and All Man was in The Man at the beginning. "In Adam all . . ." writes St. Paul, and this is not a piece of out-moded theology, but tallies with our modern understanding of psychology. Far down in the mysterious deeps below man's consciousness lie racial memories, the scars of "old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago," which sometimes rise to trouble our sleep, or take us unawares as we meet a stranger in the street. Each of us dwells in the "dream-crossed twilight" of our involvement in Mankind. Kierkegaard spoke sober truth when he said: "The individual is both himself and the race."

To Man, set at the intersection of so many planes of being, caught in this web of relations, with his real self extending so far beyond the bounds of individuality, God speaks his creative word, *Thou*, and calls him to responsibility. Creature as he is, nature's child though nature's lord, Man knows himself to be made for God: My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God.¹ The Creator sets Man on the boundaries of time and eternity, saying, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.

Within Man God draws the frontiers of such diverse realms—soul and body, mind and matter, animal and spirit, as if He would stretch Man's being by such tensions till He can play upon him as on an instrument of well-tuned strings and make the music of heaven to be heard on earth. So God calls Man to wholeness, saying, Thou shalt love with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might.

To Man in all his solidarities of family and tribe, of society and culture and of the whole race of Adam, God commands, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"Thou shalt." But can a man be called *Thou*? Determined as he is by all these complexities of his being and his

¹ *Psalm lxxxiv. 2.*

relationships, can he after all be personally responsible? If the word individual means that which cannot be divided, a single indissoluble unit, how can this multi-lateral and extended Self be in any sense unique?

The question is urgent, for if we are compelled to abandon our old individualistic concepts of Man's nature, what is to save us from plunging into the most impersonal and totalitarian collectivism? We need to learn that it is precisely by means of his involvement and his inter-relatedness that each one of us is made personal and unique. It is as if someone at the end of a symphony concert were to go back-stage to see his friend, the horn player, and say to him, "There was a magical moment at the beginning of the slow movement when the horn suddenly came in on a note which was like a shaft of light, changing the whole colour of the music. Do play me that note again." The horn player, if he were blessed with an unusual degree of patience, might reply: "But, my dear man, an isolated F sharp on a horn is just a meaningless poop! It would be identical with any other F sharp. Don't you see, it's the context of the thing which makes the note unique? It is what it is because of every other sound in the orchestra, and because of everything that's already been played and everything that's still to come."

We may put it in another way. The geometrician can determine the position of a point only by extending two lines, or describing two arcs, until they intersect. Blake, in a well-known water-colour, has portrayed the Ancient of Days stretching down towards the creation with an architect's compasses in His hand. Perhaps, in our impudence, we may be allowed to imagine what Blake has not revealed, the great sweep of those compasses describing the overlapping circles of our complex situation and, in the interstices, making Man. For it is only at the point of convergence of many spheres of being that a man receives the peculiar call of God and is compelled uniquely to answer.

Here, for example, at the fireside in the dark courtyard, is Simon bar Jonah. What components meet in him! The

tough and virile body of a fisherman, body of a Bethsaida baby circumcised the eighth day; the soul of a Jew, bred within the Covenant and under the Law, a divided soul, half Simon, half Peter; the accent of Galilee of the Gentiles, Galilee of the Zealots, despised land of non-conformity and insurrection; the wife and the wife's mother were part of him; the boat and the nets and the business were part of him; the confession and the rebuke of Caesarea Philippi were there, the glory of Hermon and the sword in the Garden, and, now, the kinsman of the wounded man. At that unreturning moment, when the spheres of experience met and demanded a decision, there was Peter.

Look again. To the hamlet of Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire has come Charles the First, arriving as a fugitive by night at Nicholas Ferrar's religious community. After his defeat at Naseby he remembered the deep spiritual calm of this place which he visited eleven years ago, and now he is here seeking, not asylum, but the guidance and the fortitude of God. Shortly after leaving Little Gidding, perhaps as a result of what he finds there, he will surrender himself to the Scots army at Newark. In this solitary man at prayer are gathered all the past Kingship of England and of Scotland, all the strife of factions in Church and in realm, the family of children, the loyalty of friends and supporters, the demands of the already dead, and of the yet unborn. Here on this day in 1646 Charles, and history, have come to rest.

Every individual and every "Now" are made in this way. Not only of that "broken king", but equally of himself and of every man, T. S. Eliot has written:

". . . history is a pattern
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
History is now and England."¹

So Professor Eichrodt maintains that: "It is into the midst of

¹ *Little Gidding*, T. S. Eliot (Faber and Faber).

history, with all its insecurity and unforeknowable possibilities that God's will leads. . . . It is only in this conscious responsibility to the concrete moment with its unforeseeable demand that man is able to affirm that personal value which God desires to give him".¹

So the point of convergence of the interlocking circles of our existence is the place of Man's enthronement where he is crowned with the glory and honour of responsibility.

*Man's curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time is an occupation for the saint—
No occupation either, but something given
And taken . . .*²

At that point of intersection the love of God calls to Everyman in his singularity: Thou shalt love. And Man replies, I will—or, I will not.

¹ *Man in the Old Testament*, Walter Erichrodt (S.C.M. Press) pp. 25-27.

² *The Dry Salvages*, T. S. Eliot (Faber and Faber).

III

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Man has said No to God. The fruits of that refusal are beyond all our power of assessment, but at the profoundest level of our understanding we know that this is the true diagnosis of our condition, and the clue to the riddle of history. The great tragedies of all the playwrights and poets are only reflections of the tragedy of Man, which is why their appeal and their truth are universal. The fairy tales of the world also tell in one way or another

*Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe.*

In the Andaman Islands they tell how the Creator warned Man not to touch certain of the jungle trees during the rainy seasons, and how disobedience led to enmity and the withdrawal of God from the company of men. The people of Madagascar, of Dahomey, of Tibet, attribute all Man's misfortunes, and death itself, to the eating of forbidden fruit. The Blackfoot Indians say that the Creator made man and woman out of clay, but they brought ruin on themselves by disobeying his laws. Everywhere sin, suffering and death are regarded as alien powers whose arrival upon the scene was due to some act of disobedience causing estrangement between God and Man.

Anthropologists and philosophers cannot easily account for the persistence of this idea. "What possible interpretation can be given," asks one, "what justification offered, of this conception, of which biology and history know nothing? Of

man's rise both have much to tell us, of his fall they never speak. When did he fall and where? Clearly, indeed, in this conception we have an allegory, and no less clearly it corresponds to some mysterious intuition, echoing from the depths of the human soul".¹

Long before the philosophers started to analyze or the theologians to systematize, Everyman has known that he is fallen, that he is a native of "the land of lost content" whither he cannot come again. "The Biblical assumption of a fall of Man is based upon the realization of the utter difference between man as he now exists in and with his society, and the willed purpose of God made known in redemptive acts. Hence Biblical man could only answer that something had happened between 'the first man' and the emergence of the society and culture in which he now lives".²

Later Christian orthodoxy has tended to theorize about the details of man's "Original Righteousness" drawing fantastic pictures of a paragon of beauty, endowed with the glorious physique of immortal youth and with mental powers "as far superior to those of the most brilliant modern philosophers as the flight of birds surpasses the sluggish movements of the tortoise". We may prefer to think of Adam as "only a man harrowing clods"; the name means Everyman, and he fell not so much from a realized glory as from his potential greatness. The Bible never so isolates the first sin from all sin as to cast our own responsibility back upon the father of our race. Adam fell indeed, and through the one man "sin entered into the world, and death through sin".³ But so has each of us fallen, and all are involved in the sin of each, and the mortality of each. "So death passed unto all men, for that all sinned." "None of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself."⁴ For the little leaven of sin, whether Adam's or yours or mine, leaveneth the whole lump. The story of the forbidden fruit

¹ *The Human Situation*, W. Macneile Dixon (Edward Arnold) p. 268.

² *The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society*, G. Ernest Wright (S.C.M. Press)

p. 37.

³ *Romans* v. 12.

⁴ *Romans* xiv. 7.

is told because of the light it throws on the nature of our disease; but the Bible is always concerned not so much with the source of the infection as with the provision of a cure.

We have seen that every human being is at the same time both unique and inseparably involved in all others. Every sin is therefore the wilful act of a responsible individual, and also a corruption received and passed on from man to man. In our disobedience we can blame no one else, yet we affect everyone else. The Bible always "sees sin as both voluntarist and constituent. . . . Where there is transgression there is also material dislocation, a state of sinfulness".¹ It has sometimes been said that in Scripture we find a progressive development from a primitive concept of communal guilt to the later idea of individual responsibility. But this is not the case. The same early code of laws which states that the iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children, reveals the utmost concern to determine the degree of the individuals' guilt in every legal case. And in a later period Jeremiah and Ezekiel, while condemning the proverb that "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge", are both quite able to recognize the social and constituent character of sin.² Sin is always both choice and contagion, and we are the villains and the victims of our own tragedy.

"And the Lord God called unto the man and said unto him, Where art thou?" Not because they had hid themselves among the trees; only a fool supposes that God plays hide and seek with men. That terrible question was God's cry of dereliction: Man had disappeared. This creature upon whom the Creator had set the divine image, whom he had placed astride the frontier of eternity and time, whose being was so delicately poised between nature and God, had slipped out of place, out of touch. The man was still there in the garden, but Manhood had been lost.

¹ G. Ernest Wright, *op. cit.* p. 40.

² See *Jeremiah* xxxi. 29; xxxii. 18; *Ezekiel* xviii. 3, 4; xxi. 3-5.

The languages of the Bantu people have an admirable device whereby the meaning of a noun may be somewhat changed by the alteration of its prefix. So, borrowing from us a word to describe something we Europeans have introduced, the Baganda call an automobile *emmotoka*. But if one drives a car too fast round a corner so that it ends up smashed against a palm tree at the roadside, they may then refer to it as *ekimotoka*, which means "a motor-car-like thing". Again, their word for man is *omusajja*; but on the same principle they may use the word *ekisajja*—"a man-like thing", to describe not only a doll or a puppet, but any human being who seems to be only half-alive. They have thus produced a word which exactly describes our true nature; for all of us have become mere *ebisajja*, man-like things, the wrecks of what we should have been. We have the bodies and brains and souls of men; we still stand at the intersection of many spheres of being; no part is missing, only the whole has gone.

By an act of disobedience and self-assertion Man puts himself outside the Will of God, and it is this which the Bible means by the word transgression. When Man says No to the will of Love his unique relationship to God is dislocated, as a marriage broken by unfaithfulness. "But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant, there have they dealt treacherously against me."¹ The heart of all such transgression is Man's repudiation of his creaturehood, the attempt to find the end and object of his existence in himself rather than God, the refusal to be trustfully dependent upon his Creator. This is the sin of Pride which is the tap-root of all sin. "Knowing God they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks . . . For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator."² It is a conception of sin's real nature which runs right through the Bible: "In the day that ye eat thereof," says the Tempter, "ye shall be as God". Whether his self-assertion is blatant, like Nebuchadnezzar's: "Is not this great Babylon which I have built . . . ?", or sincerely religious, like the pharisee's prayer, or

¹ *Hosea vi. 7.*

² *Romans i. 21, 25.*

cloaking self-reliance in the mantle of penitence, like the unforgiving servant who cried: "Have patience and I will pay thee all", Man's pride is marked always by the emphatic use of the first person singular. For, having started to blow his own trumpet, Man has to go on blowing to keep his courage up. "His sin," writes Niebuhr, "is always partly an effort to obscure his blindness by overestimating the degree of his sight, and to obscure his insecurity by stretching his power beyond its limits."¹

One of the great figures of tragedy in the Bible is King Saul, and like every tragic hero he is a picture of Man. Standing head and shoulders above his fellows, he seemed made for greatness, and at the start he possessed the child-like spirit of reliance which is anxious for nothing.² But after his coronation he began to mistrust the method and the timing of God's activity and to take the law into his own hands, until he had to be rejected in favour of another "little child" who might better enter the Kingdom. Thenceforward we see the mounting tide of Saul's angry frustration and rebellion. But we see also in him obedient faith being replaced by anxious superstition, the attempt to bend God's Will to his own plan by means of vows and omens, until, shortly before the end, Saul reaches the nadir of his degradation, creeping through the night to beg a witch to raise the futile ghost of the man whose counsel he had ignored.

Always his anxious, insecure pride aggravates Man to fresh assertiveness. A note of desperation creeps into his will-to-power, and his attitude towards God becomes one of sullen antagonism. The immature youth who in a fit of rage spits out the name of Christ coupled with obscenity is expressing a scarcely conscious desire to hurt God. The bully, the delinquent, the cynic are often concealing a frustrated anger against the Creative Love from which they have rebelled. "The carnal mind is enmity against God."³

"Darkened in his understanding and alienated from the

¹ *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, I, Reinold Niebuhr (Nisbet) p. 193.

² *I Samuel* xv. 17.

³ *Romans* viii. 7.

life of God", Saul not only has these fits of murderous rage but he knows that he has been a fool.¹ For by making himself rather than God the point of reference Man has put himself into a false position which he can maintain only by a habit of self-deception. Every sin is a denial of the truth, and the human heart is both hardened and confused by "the deceitfulness of sin"². Tertullian has described with a disconcerting insight the nature of the lies we tell ourselves: "Such is the power of earthly pleasures, that to retain the opportunity of still partaking of them the soul contrives to prolong a willing ignorance and bribes knowledge to play the cheat."³ How often we exclaim at someone's insensitiveness or error, But surely he *must* have known! With what desperate skill we excuse and rationalize, deceiving others lest they compel us to know ourselves. Professing ourselves to be wise we have become fools.⁴

Folly is the capricious unreliability of the anxious man, the stubborn self-will of the person who is insecure. Through our pretensions to glorious independence of God we now find ourselves, as the Americans say, out on a limb, and in that position we are liable to sudden vertigo. "Folly," wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "is a more dangerous enemy to the good than malice."⁵ The stories of innumerable broken homes bear this out. There is a moment when the precarious marriage might be saved; both long to forgive and build again the lost stability; and just then husband or wife says, or does, some unbelievably stupid thing, and that fragile chance is smashed beyond repair. The same thing happens to upset delicate negotiations in our industrial disputes; like a climber with a poor head or a slightly tipsy driver, one man slips or swerves and the damage is done. Again and again in our colonial territories we see, just at the moment when patience and consideration are most needed, the precious goodwill of a people or an individual shattered by one man's act or word,

¹ *I Samuel* xxvi. 21.

² *Hebrews* iii. 13. *Romans* i. 21.

³ *De Spectaculis* I.

⁴ *Romans* i. 22; cf. *Jeremiah* x. 14, 15.

⁵ *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (S.C.M. Press),

until we are compelled to remember the grim exclamation attributed to Euripides: "Whom God would destroy he first makes mad".

One element in his self-deception is Man's reliance upon law. We have seen that the biblical conception of the divine Will is of an unconditional demand laid upon every man by his personal encounter with God to which he must make his individual response moment by moment. As Professor Eichrodt explains: "It is at a definite point in temporal events, in the here and now, that this will assumes definite and unrecurring form, in which it demands obedience". "Time becomes the unrecurring reality which is given by God and which . . . inexorably calls for a decision here and now and permits no rest in some secure position which is valid once for all."¹ But man by his false assumption of independence has cut himself off from the immediate awareness of the Will, and seeks to bolster his inner security and to protect his society from anarchy by means of a code of laws "valid once for all". God confronts Man personally and demands responsible *ad hoc* answers to His calling; but Man tries to substitute an abstract principle with a routine application which will depersonalize obedience. The Bible contains the story of this struggle. The Torah, the teaching of the covenant, as the prophets understood it and as Jesus endorsed it, "does not produce a rounded and well-thought-out system"²; it was given to sign-post the way to the Peace of Israel, and ideally it was to be written in human hearts. But fallen Man is a legalist and by his codification and professional techniques he made the Torah of none effect, and laid on human shoulders the heavy burden of the law.

Now Man has set in motion that vicious spiral of inner self-destruction which Paul the pharisee so penetratingly described: "I had not known sin except through the law . . . but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. . . . For sin, finding occasion through the commandment beguiled

¹ *Man in the Old Testament*, Walther Eichrodt, (S.C.M. Press) pp. 26, 27.

² *Ibid.* p. 26.

me, and through it slew me".¹ Rather than obey God out of love Man chooses to obey law out of duty. Trying to be good, his motives are mixed and inadequate, so when the ordinary strength of temptation is intensified by the prohibition of law, he succumbs. For experience as well as legend bears witness to the fascination of locked doors, forbidden fruits and sealed caskets. "The power of sin is the law."² Then, when he has broken his law and fallen short of his "ego ideal" man feels guilty and frustrated. Out of the tension he seeks to escape, either by obscuring his shame in grimmer concentration upon his ideal, or by releasing his frustration in a more brazen repetition of his sin. Either way anxiety provokes him to sin, and sin increases his insecurity.

Nothing can release Man from this treadmill of law, sin and guilt, except repentance, and this he dreads more than hell itself. The psychologist Carl Jung, writing of modern man, says that "to accept himself in all his wretchedness is the hardest of tasks and one which it is almost impossible to fulfil. The very thought can make us livid with fear".³ Yet without repentance even modern man, who is said to have no sense of sin, carries a burden of "close, pent-up guilts" which are the major problem of the psychiatrist's clinic. "There appears to be a conscience in mankind," says Jung, "which severely punishes the man who does not somehow and at some time, at whatever cost to his pride, cease to defend and assert himself. . . . Until he can do this an impenetrable wall shuts him out from the living experience of feeling himself a man among men".⁴ It is our Manhood that is lost.

Not only is Man's fellowship with God destroyed by sin, but all the finely balanced relationships of his constitution have gone awry. Made as a creature, Man had, as it were, been called to God's side to stand as the priest and mediator

¹ *Romans* vii. 7-11.

² *I Corinthians* xv. 56.

³ *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, C. G. Jung (Kegan Paul) p. 272.

⁴ C. G. Jung, *ibid.* p. 40.

towards nature. But by placing himself outside the Will of God, he has lost his original vocation; and the resulting purposelessness of his life is pre-eminently the cause of neuroses and breakdown. Set as a steward over his Lord's household, Man has assumed absolute rights over his Master's other servants and, forgetful of his calling, begins savagely to abuse his authority¹. His intelligence and skill win for him fantastic technical triumphs; but his God-given dominion becomes an aggressive dominance. Instead of regarding nature as a realm towards which he has obligations, he observes it as a Thing to be exploited. In C. S. Lewis's fantasy of the planet Venus, one of the first signs that the Lady of Perelandra was beginning to succumb to the influence of the Tempter was when she put on the robe made of feathers plucked from the birds of the island. In our own world the hideous ravaging of the soil and the irresponsible exhaustion of natural resources are the wounds Man has dealt in his conquest of nature.

But nature avenges herself on Man. Having looked on her as a thing to be used, like the sorcerer's apprentice he finds the Thing rising to engulf him. "The leaders have now only the semblance of control over the madly racing machines. Man has fallen beneath the tyranny of the exuberantly growing It."² Losing his hold on God, Man falls back into nature. Refusing to live by the Will of God he condemns himself to live by "the will of the flesh"; abandoning the liberty of the children of God, he sells himself into the determinism of the rest of nature; as he will not live beneath the span of eternity, he must count his days beneath the span of mortality; "for he that soweth unto his own flesh must of the flesh reap corruption".³ The ever present shadow of death darkens all our thinking with gloom and futility, for the mind of the flesh *is* death.⁴

But for all his gallantry Man cannot accept this destiny with equanimity, for the "immortal longings" in him have

¹ St. Luke xii. 42-46.

² *I and Thou*, Martin Buber (T. and T. Clarke).

³ *Galatians* vi. 8.

⁴ *Romans* viii. 6.

not died. Dispossessed of eternity, unharnessed from the purposes of God, he searches restlessly for meaning and value to his life.

*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing.*

Within ourselves also the delicate inter-relation of different spheres of being has been dislocated and the balance of our nature is upset. Having exploited for our pleasure the animal within us we have grown to fear and despise it, and our life is crippled by the warfare within ourselves. "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: for these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye may not do the things that ye would."¹ In this disharmony even body and soul have been involved, so that three-quarters of the world's religions are built upon fear of the body and the attempt to isolate the soul by asceticism and world-negation.

But it is in Man's involvement in the lives of others that the tyranny of sin is most evident. "Sin manifests itself in material and social dislocations. Its results include warped personalities with darkened vision, and, as well, a darkened society. Sin, in short, becomes a constituent aspect of things as they are. Neither human life nor a human community can ever really begin anew on its own resources."² The threads of inter-relation that were meant to bind all men in the bundle of life with the Lord their God³ now enmesh them in a solidarity of sinfulness. Our sexuality, which should have been the sacrament of our incompleteness within our individuality, has become the most intense expression of individual self-will using another for its own indulgence or idolatry. Our dependence on one another for life's neces-

¹ Galatians v. 17.

² G. Ernest Wright, *op. cit.* p. 45.

³ I Samuel xxv. 29.

sities, which should have knit mankind into a community of goodwill, only entangles us in a competitive world-order so that against our wills we fight like cats in a sack. Our involvement in our own society, whereby each attains his full selfhood by partaking of, and communicating himself to, the living flow of tradition and culture, becomes a source of evil infection when the life-stream of a people is poisoned by materialism, hatred or fear. "Send us a liberal," they say in South Africa, "and after a year in our country he will think as we do." Nationality, which the Bible sees as an essential feature in every child of man, given to enrich and enhance his self-offering to God, operates now upon man's sinfulness like the lens-apparatus of a lighthouse, reflecting outwards a million candlepower of pride, self-will and hypocrisy. History, by which we are made one with the generations of the past and the future, becomes a dark road on which the unresolved and unforgiven things of centuries ago, like a "frightful fiend" treading close behind, may suddenly overtake us. "The moment of crisis comes," as Dr. Gordon Rupp says, "and individual men and women find themselves acting as types, as representatives of a system which has become rigid and hardened through the centuries."¹

It seems as though the complicated pattern of intersecting spheres into which the individual's self is extended has through Man's transgression turned into a network of evil from which Man is powerless to escape. Instead of standing free, as God's viceroy, astride the boundaries of nature and spirit, of history and eternity, Man is spreadeagled, a defiant but helpless Prometheus, upon the torturing complexities of his being.

This solidarity of evil in which every man finds himself engulfed is what the New Testament calls the Principalities and Powers. "Our wrestling," says St. Paul, "is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."² This

¹ *Principalities and Powers*, Gordon Rupp (Epworth Press) p. 17.

² *Ephesians* vi. 12.

is not a static contest, but one in which Man is actually being pressed back and back towards destruction. Today he is nervously asking how, if at all, he is superior to the electronic brain. For by losing our relationship of personal response to God we have been cut off from the fountain-head of true personality. The principalities and powers are working towards the dehumanizing of Man, and Man in his isolation has no resources to resist the cold, rising tide of collectivism. Every one of the great civilizations has militated against responsible personal action in the majority of the population, but this process has been uniquely accelerated in the last two centuries. Charles Morgan has described how the industrial revolution de-spiritualized men's relationship with their fellows. "A grey soullessness appeared in societies under numerical pressure. It caused men at all levels to think of others and even of themselves too easily as anonymous members of vast statistical groups and much less easily than in the past as knowable, distinguishable beings who had, each one, been a boy or girl, who was happy or lonely or afraid, whose hand one might touch and whose look one might recognize."¹

Modern Man's desperate attempt to save himself by an intense individualism is futile, for he is thereby only playing into the Enemy's hands. The modern artist in his introversion, the modern scientist in his specialization, have almost arrived at complete breakdown of communication, and in the Church extreme individualism is dissipating the Christian witness in a multiplicity of sects. Puzzled African peasants describe Europeans as "the people who do not greet one another in the street". In the name of freedom Man cuts himself off from the life of community in which alone he can find personal value and love. For, as D. H. Lawrence said: "Hate is not the opposite of love. The real opposite of love is individuality."

In this desert of isolationism Man falls an easy prey to the principalities and powers. By mass instruction they would eliminate from him in childhood the power of independent

¹ *Liberties of the Mind*, Charles Morgan (Macmillan) p. 33.

judgment, by radio and headline they would stereotype his adult thinking, by mechanized entertainment they would debase the currency of his imagination; until in the end he is changed from a person who responds into a thing which reacts.

But this has not happened yet. There is a strange toughness in this creature Man; the image of God dies hard in him, and his thirst for goodness and for God persists through all his tragic degradation. For God has set his love upon Man, the love that will not let him go, and has sent to his rescue One who threw off from himself the principalities and powers and triumphed openly over them. When fallen Man, even modern Man, can see that Deliverer standing at his side, he will exclaim with sudden, overwhelming recognition, "Lo: this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation".¹

IV

BEHOLD THE MAN!

SO age after age the generations watched and waited for deliverance, and from the aspiring and defeated heart of Man rose the cry: "O Lord, how long?"

But the great deliverance that men were yearning for was not simply a private, esoteric salvation, such as the mystery cults were offering their initiates, but the rescue of mankind. For if one man is no man, then a purely individual redemption is no redemption. Man in his solidarity had sinned and fallen, and in his solidarity he awaited the taking away of the sin of the world and the restoration of his lost manhood.

So, as the march of the centuries drew nearer to the hour of deliverance, a redeemed and redeeming community was called into being, to be the nucleus of a restored mankind. The recovery of an "I—Thou" relationship with God had been made possible by the faith and obedience of Abraham, which was a faint reversal of the mistrust and disobedience of the sons of Adam. But the initiative lay with God who by the sheer grace of a new creative word called into being His chosen people; and so it was at Sinai that the new community really came to birth, when a rabble of slaves, who had forgotten even the name of the God of their fathers, were miraculously delivered that they might become a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation.¹ Man's restored relationship with God was sealed by a solemn covenant and expressed in the gracious gift of the Torah, the revealed order for the abundant life of the new community. Yet this was to be no privileged breed of fondlings, but the *Ecclesia*, the pioneer corps of the new

¹ *Exodus* xix. 5, 6.

humanity, through whom the whole race of Man should be drawn back into the Peace of God.

But Israel would not, or rather could not, fulfil her destiny. The old infection of apostasy and selfwill was never eradicated from the people's life; the blessing of the Torah was turned into the burden of the law; and when at last the discipline of exile brought the nation to some degree of religious purity, instead of carrying the precious knowledge to the rest of the world, it turned in upon itself, hugging its spiritual pride and drawing in its skirts from the defilement of the Gentiles. The prophets had realized early that "they are not all Israel which are of Israel".¹ Hope focused then upon the faithful Remnant, the inner core of true believers; this nucleus of the covenanted people shrank smaller and smaller, until at last there were only the scattered groups of the Devout who were looking for the consolation of Israel. The Old Covenant had laid down the lines for the building of the restored community, and had provided the "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ".² But the men of the Old Covenant were still "in Adam", still incorporated in that "body of sin", the solidarity of fallen Man, of which Adam was the head. There could be no new community and no new covenant until God created a new Body, a solidarity of restored Man, deriving from a new Head. "For as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One shall the many be made righteous."³

*O Loving Wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.*

We are accustomed to think that if we want to know what God is like we must look at Jesus Christ, and should our conception of God differ in any way from what we see in Jesus, then our picture of God needs to be adjusted. But it is equally true to say that if we want to know what Man really is we

¹ *Romans ix. 6.*

² *Galatians iii. 24.*

³ *Romans v. 19.*

must look at Jesus Christ, for only in Him have we ever seen what Martin Luther called "the proper Man".

Since Man would not be recalled by the Word of God, though daily God "rose up early" to speak and summon him,¹ the Word must Himself be made the new Man in whom mankind may be renewed. St. John clearly draws attention to the correspondence between the first creation, when "in the beginning" God spake the Word and the worlds were made, and the second act of creation when the Word, who was "in the beginning with God", was made flesh.² St. Luke also hints at the same correspondence by calling Adam "the son of God", and recalling that the angel of the Annunciation told the Virgin Mary that "the holy thing which is to be born shall be called the son of God".³ "Christ," says Irenaeus, "recapitulates the ancient creation in himself."

That Jesus Himself came to understand His relationship with His Father in terms of the loving obedience of the perfect Man to God is shown in His choice of the phrase "Son of Man" to describe Himself. There is some reaction today against the idea that this is primarily a Messianic title. "There is little evidence," says Dr. C. H. Dodd in his recent work on the Fourth Gospel, "that in pre-Christian Judaism the term Son of Man was used as a messianic title." After a detailed study of the use of the title he concludes, "The term 'the Son of Man' throughout this Gospel retains the sense of one who incorporates in Himself the people of God, or humanity in its ideal aspect. . . . He was the true self of the human race, standing in that perfect union with God, to which others can attain only as they are incorporate in Him".⁴ Another commentator applies the same interpretation to the use of the term in the Synoptic gospels also: "The title designates Jesus as *the Man* in whom human nature was most fully and deeply realized and who was . . . destined ultimately to exalt it to

¹ *Jeremiah* vii. 13, 25.

² *St. John* x. 1, 14.

³ *St. Luke* i. 35, *R.V.M.*; iii. 38.

⁴ *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, C. H. Dodd (Cambridge University Press) pp. 241-249.

unexampled majesty and glory".¹ It is *the* Man who has power to forgive the sins of fallen men, having tasted their temptation and shared the penalties of their failure;² and so it is *the* Man who has authority to be our judge.³ It is this one perfect Man who must suffer many things and be lifted up to draw the rest of humanity unto Himself.⁴ "It is for this," says Irenaeus again, "that the Lord confesses himself the Son of Man, summing up again into himself that original man out of whom the whole propagation by woman came: that as, through man conquered, our whole race went down into death, so through man conquering, we might ascend into life."⁵

But Jesus did not come only to demonstrate what Man was meant to be, starting from the vantage point of Adam's first perfection; He had to start where we are now and win back to the position that Adam had lost. The first man, says St. Paul, was living but the second was life-giving.⁶ And so Jesus Christ entered as other men into the whole solidarity of our human condition. He was involved in all the intersecting spheres of our being in order that the whole race of Man might become involved in Him. "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."⁷ He not only came to us as complete and perfect Man, but He submitted to the bondage into which we have sold ourselves, "taking the form of a slave"; that is to say He voluntarily entered beneath the sway of the elemental spirits of the world, the principalities and powers which have enthralled us.⁸ Karl Barth goes so far as to say unhesitatingly that, though Christ was without sin, yet "his situation was, both from the inside and out, that of a sinner. He freely entered upon solidarity with our lost and wretched state. So, and only so,

¹ *Dictionary of the Bible* IV, J. Hastings (T. and T. Clarke) p. 587.

² *St. Mark* ii. 10.

³ *St. John* v. 27; *St. Mark* viii. 38.

⁴ *St. Mark*, viii. 31; *St. John* viii. 28.

⁵ Irenaeus. *con Haer* V. 21.

⁶ *I Corinthians* xv. 45.

⁷ *Galatians* iv. 4, 5.

⁸ *Philippians* ii. 7; *Galatians* iv. 3.

could the revelation of God to us, our reconciliation with him, take place in him and through him".¹

The Baptism was the occasion when Jesus overtly accepted His position of total identification with fallen Man in his servitude. This was indeed his immersion into the tensions and cross-purposes of human nature, into the determinism of tradition and history and nationality,² into the tragic battlefield of our defeated race. Miss Dorothy Sayers' Christ says of the moment of his baptism: "I felt the shoulder of God stoop beneath the sin of the world". "Him who knew no sin God made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him".³ So, ranging Himself with us in our sinfulness, He begs for the baptism of repentance, and goes out to the waste-land to fight our ancient Enemy under the same disabilities that beset us.

*O wisest love, that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe,
Should strive and should prevail.*

For although He had taken the form of a slave He intended no obedience; and by His consistent disobedience to the mastery of sin He reversed the consequences of man's disobedience to the Lordship of God. In the threefold temptation in the wilderness He recapitulated the temptation in the garden, with its appeals to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life".⁴ Thereafter He carried His disobedience unbroken against all the pressures and claims of the ordinary concomitants of our human life which, being infected by sin, enmesh us to our destruction. Although through all the hidden years He was subject to his mother, yet twice or thrice He startles us by his non-compliance with the ties of kinship.⁵ He defies the dominance of tradition and

¹ *Dogmatik* I. 2, Karl Barth (Lutterworth Press) p. 166, quoted in *The Body*, J. A. T. Robinson (S.C.M. Press) p. 38.

² See *St. Luke* iii. 1, 2.

³ *II Corinthians* v. 21.

⁴ *I John* ii. 16; *Genesis* iii. 6; *St. Matthew* iv. 3-10.

⁵ *St. Luke* ii. 48-50; *St. John* ii. 4; *St. Mark* iii. 31-35; *St. John* vii. 8, 9.

culture, for *the Man* is lord of the Sabbath and will not conform with the popular conceptions of holiness.¹ Living in moment-by-moment response to the stirring of his Father's Will, as Man was meant to do, He rejects the concept of a rigid code of law, abstract and uniform,² and discovers, in free obedience, infinitely richer meaning in the teaching of the Torah, uncovering it from under a pile of dusty lumber, and revealing in its inwardness the glad well-being of the responsible society of God's children.³ He abrogates all the unconditional claims of His society and nation,⁴ and He steadily disobeys the demands of what we regard as normal self-interest and self-preservation.⁵ So He passes scatheless through all the infection of sin inherent in the manifold relationships of our life and can say before the final encounter: "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me".⁶

But over against this heroic disobedience to Man's ancient taskmaster, there is the breath-taking quality of Jesus' perfect obedience to God. In Him obedience is love, and the response to love; though so costly and ardent, there is a quietness and lack of tension about it, so that we are astonished at its naturalness until we remember that this is the only truly natural Man who has ever lived.

In the first place we see in Jesus Christ that absolute acceptance of His creaturehood and that untroubled dependence upon God which the first man had cast away. "I can of myself do nothing." "The living Father sent me and I live because of the Father." "Give us day by day our daily bread."⁷ So the essence of His teaching about the way to live is: "Be not anxious for your life". "Be not anxious for the morrow." "Be not anxious how or what ye shall speak."⁸ "Why reason ye because ye have no bread? Do ye not yet perceive,

¹ *St. Mark* ii. 28; *St. Matthew* xi. 19.

² *St. Mark* vii. 5-13.

³ *St. Mark* vii. 15; *St. Matthew* v. 17-48.

⁴ *St. Matthew* xvii. 24-26; *St. Luke* iv. 25-27; *St. Mark* xii. 17.

⁵ *St. Matthew* viii. 20; *St. John* xi. 8; xviii. 7-11.

⁶ *St. John* xiv. 30.

⁷ *St. John* v. 30; vi. 57; *St. Luke* xi. 3.

⁸ *St. Matthew* vi. 25-34; x. 19.

neither understand? Have ye your heart hardened?"¹ "Why are ye fearful? Have ye not yet faith?"² "Thou wouldst have no power against me except it were given thee from above."³ "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."⁴

By maintaining this creaturely obedience Jesus lived, as Man was originally made to live, so as "to make his whole life a response to the question and call of God".⁵ In this perfect responsibility of Jesus the image of God was unmarred. He reflected continuously, as in the surface of a deep, unruffled pool, the Being and the Will of the Father. "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing; for what things soever He doeth, these the Son doeth in like manner."⁶ By virtue of this pure reflection the Lord can say "He that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me".⁷ So in the epistles we find Christ is called "the image of God",⁸ and Irenaeus wrote, "He summed up in himself the whole long evolution of humanity, and so in a single concentrated achievement brought salvation to us, that what we had lost in Adam, that is, to be in the likeness of God, we might regain in Christ Jesus".⁹

This life of unceasing response was demonstrated supremely in the relationship of Jesus to the Father in prayer. Prayer was the atmosphere in which He moved and had His being; prayer preceded every decision, and anchored Him within His Father's Will; prayer was agony as long as, even in His thought, the unimaginable contrast existed between "my will" and "thy Will". Because of His prayer it is impossible for us to speak of "the self-consciousness of Jesus", for that was always swallowed up in His consciousness of God. "He that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him."¹⁰ So He breathed

¹ *St. Mark* viii. 17.

² *St. Mark* iv. 40.

³ *St. John* xix. 11.

⁴ *St. John* xxi. 22. ⁵ *Letters and Papers from Prison*, D. Bonhoeffer, p. 16.

⁶ *St. John* v. 19.

⁷ *St. John* xii. 45; cf. xiv. 7.

⁸ *II Corinthians* iv. 4; *Colossians* i. 15; *Hebrews* i. 3.

⁹ *Irenaeus op. cit.* III. xviii. 1. ¹⁰ *St. John* viii. 29.

in love, and love irradiated every particle of His being. "For the Father loveth the Son and sheweth him all things that he himself doeth."¹

Here, then, was Man perfectly imaging the Father, infused with the Breath of Life which is the Spirit, the vibrant energy of God. Jesus was so intensely alive that seen against that glowing vitality other men seemed like candle-flames in the sun. He was so real that His gaze never flickered or swerved with the self-deception that is habitual to us, but He "saw life steadily and saw it whole". Yet never did He guard Himself from the impact of sin and suffering. We throw around ourselves the hard protective shell of indifference, and, beyond the small circle of our personal sympathies, ward off the woe of the world with the high walls of our individualism. But Jesus, because He was wide open to God, was wide open to men, for it is impossible to be one without the other. The vicarious suffering of Christ was not, as it has sometimes been represented, a sort of legal fiction; "in all their afflictions he was afflicted" was quite literally true through the imaginative sensitiveness of His perfect Manhood. In a limitless compassion He Himself knew what was in Man.² He groped in the darkness of Bartimaeus, and was filled with the self-loathing of the leper; His soul was sick with the Magdalen's sin, and was lost in the tortuous suspicions of Judas. As true Man He felt to the full His involvement with All-Man, and carried the world in His heart.

So although He was unique in His responsiveness to the Father, and so terribly alone in His awareness of things that were hid from other minds, He was the least individualist of all men. His relationship to God was always that of Man in his concrete togetherness with all men. For Him it was perpetually true that the "I" has its real existence in the gathering together of the two or three. In all His living we see a wholehearted welcome of His share in the interdependence of all mankind. He found His joy in the feasts of His friends and the songs of children, and His grief with them that

¹ *St. John* v. 20.

² *St. John* ii. 25.

wept. He seemed to delight in the generosity of give and take. "Freely ye received, freely give."¹ "If ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye?" "When thou makest a dinner or supper, call not thy friends nor brethren . . . lest haply they also bid thee again."² Yet Jesus, so generous in giving, showed the generosity of taking too. He warned His followers that there are no Rights of Man in His company, and no proud refusal of loving charity either. For Man's life consists not in nature's struggle for security but in the free interchange of loving in which each gives unstintingly and takes what comes. "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but *the* Man has not where to lay his head."³ Men, therefore, should travel light, serve to the utmost, and take gracefully: "eating and drinking such things as they give, for the labourer is worthy of his hire".⁴ He Himself borrowed boat or donkey as occasion required, and accepted hospitality from pharisee and publican alike. "Friend, lend me three loaves" seemed to Him a natural request to make at midnight on someone else's behalf and He finds a touch of comedy in the reluctance of the sleepy neighbour. For the real Man is not anxious and troubled about standards of living or keeping up appearances, for such things have no part in the peace of the people of God.⁵ In this glad, free adventure of human interdependence He

*"... rejects the lore
Of nicely calculated less and more,"*

and puts His faith unreservedly in a strange law of increasing returns: "Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give unto your bosom".⁶

He accepted with the same zest God's vocation to Man to be a worker and creator. The thirty years of toil at Nazareth were not a mere passing of the time to Him, but were the very life of Man He had come to live. Perhaps it

¹ *St. Matthew* x. 8.

² *St. Luke* vi. 34; xiv. 12.

³ *St. Luke* ix. 58.

⁴ *St. Luke* x. 4-9.

⁵ *St. Luke* x. 40-42.

⁶ *St. Luke* vi. 38.

was while doing overtime at the bench He learned to say: "My Father worketh even until now, and I work".¹ By virtue of this absolute obedience in co-operation, Jesus as Man was able to be the vehicle of the creative love of God, as all men were potentially made to be. "If I by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you."² This power of God working through the perfect Manhood of the Lord enabled Him to take up again that dominion over nature which Man had lost. We see in Jesus the loving reverence towards nature, and also the absolute authority over her, which might have been the prerogative of Man had he not let go his hold on God and abused his stewardship. "We must think of the powers exercised by Christ," says Professor Hodgson, "as being powers open to manhood where manhood is found in its perfection."³ "He that believeth on me the works that I do shall he do also: and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father."⁴

The culmination of Christ's revelation of the original meaning of Manhood was the Transfiguration. This was not just an incidental unveiling, somewhat out of character, of the glory of the only-begotten of the Father. It was the natural climax to perfect Man's undeviating obedience to the Will of God. The first Man, falling back into nature, became subject to death. But in the transfiguration of Jesus "we see what would have happened, we see the ultimate perfection that God intends for Man. No physical deterioration, no rending of the earthly body from the soul, but metamorphosis, as smooth as sunrise, into the full-grown Man. That was what Adam's uphill journey would have led him to if he had stood the rigours of the way. Thither the Second Adam's uphill journey actually did lead him: and perfected Man stood on an earthly mountain-top, and was seen by the mortal eyes of Peter, James and John".⁵

¹ *St. John* v. 17.

² *St. Luke* xi. 20.

³ *And was made Man*, L. Hodgson (Longmans Green) p. 133.

⁴ *St. John* xiv. 12.

⁵ *As in Adam*, A Religious of the C.S.M.V. (Mowbray) p. 54.

Moses and Elijah, who appeared with Him then, were said to have ended their earthly lives in ways that were a faint approximation to this glory. And in the lives of many of the saints, when all legend has been discarded, there remains undeniable evidence of bodily incorruption sustained for years after their death as though this principle were struggling to operate in those whose union with Christ had been most nearly complete.

But as in the moment of His immersion into our sinful state, so now as He assumes the glory proper to His perfect Manhood, the voice of God acknowledges Jesus as the Beloved Son whom He was giving for the salvation of the world. That salvation had not yet been won. Through bitter temptation and the stern lessons of obedience and night-long wrestling, Christ Jesus had won back our lost Manhood; but now the new humanity must be made available for all. He must needs undergo "the double agony", first *in* man, and now *for* man, before He can bring His many sons to glory. In the shining splendour of His transfigured and immortal manhood He was speaking of His decease.¹ No man can take His life from Him but He lays it down of Himself; for that is the Father's commandment.² So as the merciful cloud hides from human eyes the anguish of His renunciation, by the deliberate act of His will the glory fades, and in the weakness of mortality He goes down again into the valley to face the imbecile boy, and the imbecile world.

Just as the man of God stretched himself upon the Shunamite's dead child, "and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands", that he might restore him to life,³ even so our great Deliverer stretched Himself across the tangled, intersecting planes of our human life and was transfixed upon the Cross of our corrupted Manhood. "They crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst."⁴ It was where He had always been.

¹ *St. Luke* ix. 31.

² *St. John* x. 18.

³ *II Kings* iv. 34.

⁴ *St. John* xix. 18.

We fallen men have consistently tried to contract out of our membership in humanity: we will not be held responsible for the sins of our world. The burden of them is intolerable, so we refuse it. Occasionally the truth breaks through into our imagination. There was a young man, for example, some years ago, who after seeing a film of the French Revolution went back to his rooms and wept, praying: "Lord, forgive us all". But this truth, which we may admit for a rare moment and then forget again, was ever-present to Christ's sensitive awareness. As perfect Man, fully involved in mankind, He accepted the blame for the tragedy of the world. "I told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."¹ "Behold the Lamb of God, who beareth the sin of the world."²

The one who bears sin is the one who will not throw it back on to another. In parts of Africa young boys play a game with stones heated in a fire, tossing them from one to another; sometimes a lad will prove his courage by holding a stone for a few seconds, but soon he can bear it no longer and throws it to someone else. So Mankind deals with its sins; they never come to rest. When a man is wronged he waits to get his own back; if he cannot hit back at the offender, he takes it out of his wife, and she works it off on the children. And as on this trivial, so on the tragic scale. Aeschylus showed this principle at work in the doom of the house of Atreus, where retaliation follows revenge in generation after generation, and there seems no way out. Only forgiveness can break the curse of justice, because forgiveness grasps the searing stone of sin and will not pass it on. The man who forgives a debt carries the cost himself, and he who forgives a blow lets the sting and scorn of it sink into himself until it is absorbed there by love. So on the Cross the Love of God in Man bore the sin of mankind, and the age-long curse of it died out in him;³ God in Man forgave the transgression and antagonism of our race, submitting to the evil of it until it was swallowed up and submerged in fathomless love.

It is true, of course, that the Cross belongs to eternity, so

¹ *St. John* xviii. 8. ² *St. John* i. 29 R.V.M. ³ *Galatians* iii. 13.

that what men did to Jesus and what He did for them reveals what we do continually to God and how He requites us. But this Man died in history, and His death did something to history. We speak of turning points in history, but there has only been the one. Up to that point history ran straight on; but three crosses stand like the three *metae* at the end of the course in the Roman circus, round which the racing chariots must swing in a sudden, perilous turn before beginning the run home to the starting point. "History slows down in the Gospels, until at last all history moves from action to passion, and jerks to a halt before the three hours' silence of Jesus on his Cross."¹ Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the end of the tragedy, and the head of the new humanity. At the Resurrection the recapitulation of history begins.

A Religious of the C.S.M.V. has written finely of that supreme Event. "For six weeks of springtime nineteen centuries ago perfected Man was seen and loved on this same earth that the unfallen Adam, the germinal Man, had walked millions of years before, and that we live on now. At will He showed Himself, at will He was unseen. He consorted with His friends, and went for walks, and shared a supper, and picnicked by the lake. Nothing could have been homelier, nothing more natural. For it *was* natural; that is the point. And His sole Resurrection from the unnumbered myriads of the dead is the pledge and proof that the road to Man's natural perfection once more lies open to all the sons of men".²

¹ *Principalities and Powers*, E. Gordon Rupp (Epworth Press) p. 32.

² *As in Adam*, A Religious of the C.S.M.V. (Mowbray) p. 58.

V

A MAN IN CHRIST

ON the evening of the first Easter Day there was enacted a strange and profoundly significant scene. As the Beloved Disciple depicts it, it has the patterned solemnity of a ritual. To the terrified and stricken group of friends the Risen Lord appeared suddenly standing "in the midst", as is His wont. First He said "Peace", and showed them His hands and His side. But the disciples could take in nothing then but their overwhelming joy. So again Jesus said "Peace", and added: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost".¹ From that moment we are never again told that the disciples were afraid.

What was the significance of these words and acts of the Lord? First, He had given them the Peace. The lovely Hebrew word *Shalom*, Peace, has the fundamental meaning of Wholeness, and is the term used to describe the God-given life of the community of the Covenant. Man, distracted upon the web of his multiplex involvement, "poor, intricate, riddling, labyrinthical soul!" as Donne called him, longs for the Peace of the People of God which gathers all relationships into a harmony of mutual well-being. Jesus can say to him, "Go into peace and be whole".² To give the Peace was to recognize a fellow member of the divine community, for peace is the special mark and bond of the brotherhood of Israel which binds the People of God into the unity of the Spirit. So they blessed one another, saying, Peace upon you and upon the Israel of God.³ Now, in that Upper Room where three

¹ St. John xx. 19-23.

² St. Mark v. 34 (Greek).

³ I Samuel xxv. 6; Psalm cxxv. 5; Galatians vi. 16.

nights previously Jesus had by solemn sacrament inaugurated the new Covenant in His Blood, He greets the New Israel with the old watchword, Peace. Henceforth that peace is to be made available for all men, because the new community of the Covenant is open to Jew and Gentile alike.¹

"And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side." And, after the repetition of the Peace, He said: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." The new Israel was going to stem from the person of the crucified and risen Servant of the Lord. The old Israel had, as it were, narrowed down and down, from the Nation to the Remnant, from the Remnant to the few Devout, until all that the prophets had spoken was focused and fulfilled upon Jesus only. He alone was the Chosen, and the Kingdom, of God. But now the pattern of contraction is changed to one of expansion. From the broken and glorified Body of Him who was "greater than our father Jacob",² of Him who alone was the true seed of Abraham,³ there is going to issue the new Community of God,⁴ called and sent as He was called and sent, to become a broken Body for the life of the world.⁵

The old Israel had failed to fulfil her calling because, though children of Abraham, her sons still belonged to the old humanity, they were "Israel after the flesh".⁶ A new *Ecclesia* will fare no better than the old, even though her Founder is the Son of God, unless it can be built of new materials. The thing that appeared in the world after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was not just a new Church, still less a continuation of the old, but the New Man. "He breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Just as God breathed into Man's nostrils the Breath of Life, so that he first became a living soul, so now the Incarnate Word breathes the breath of His own being into this band of brethren to make the Second Creation of which He Himself is the Adam, the firstfruits and the Head. The effect

¹ *St. Luke* ii. 14; *Acts* x. 36; *Ephesians* ii. 17.

² *St. John* iv. 12.

³ *Galatians* iii. 16.

⁴ *Galatians* iii. 29.

⁵ *St. John* xx. 21; *Revelation* xvii. 14.

⁶ *I Corinthians* x. 18.

of this gift was delayed until Pentecost, just as the understanding of the words and actions of the Lord dawned only slowly upon the young Church; but in that moment the miracle of the incorporation of fallen Man into the Manhood of Christ was offered to the world. "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old things are passed away: behold, they are become new."¹

Nothing less than this can meet Man's condition. I vividly remember a scene in the vestry of an African church. As I was disrobing at the end of a service a peasant came into the room. We have no peasants now in England. He stood there as a man who had grown up painfully out of the soil; his shins and his bare, broken feet were stained with the red of the earth, and there was dust in his hair; a limp sheet of bark-cloth clung to his spare figure; his eyes had the animal wariness of a man whose thoughts are slow. He came and clutched the stuff of my cassock, saying, "I want to come out of the grave." He was referring to the sermon that had just been preached; but in his words I seemed to hear the voice of all the submerged peoples of the world, the cry, indeed, of all the sons of men. We knelt together on the vestry floor and he stretched out his hands to Jesus; and the old, incredible miracle of rebirth took place once more. That day I saw Adam put on the radiance of the new manhood in Christ.

The heart of the Christian experience is this incorporation into Jesus Christ. The most characteristic phrase of all the Pauline epistles are the words "In Christ"; but the underlying idea is expressed with even greater frequency in the Fourth Gospel. Christ, the only real Man, offers to us an actual participation in His Manhood; He who shrank not from a total identification with us in all our sinfulness, welcomes us into full identification with Himself in His perfection. It is the partnership of the heir with the dispossessed, of the solvent with the bankrupt, of the honourable with the discredited. "Him who knew no sin God made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in him."²

¹ *II Corinthians* v. 17 R.V.M.

² *II Corinthians* v. 21.

"And they may have righteousness put to their credit, freely, by his grace, through the salvation which is *in Christ Jesus*."¹ In Christ we share in that death by which He "died out on sin";² so also in Him we share in that perfect life which was raised again on the third day.

The life we now live is His life in us. Our gladness comes not with the ebb and flow of earthly happiness, but we have Christ's joy in us, that joy which was set before Him even as He endured the Cross.³ We of ourselves bring not strength but weakness to the battle yet we have His power and can do all things *in Him* who strengthens us.⁴ The peace which garrisons our hearts comes not from the beautiful thoughts we try to think but straight from the heart of Jesus, for it is His own peace He gives to us.⁵ Even the prayer we offer is not our meagre human supplication, but He prays in us and for us, and our best worship is only His self-oblation in us.⁶ As our redemption consists in our entering into Christ, so our sanctification consists in our abiding in Him, for apart from Him we can do nothing.⁷

By what means is a man oned with Christ? Primarily this is the work of the Creator Spirit, who is always brooding over the face of the deep to bring a new world to light. He first takes the things of Jesus and makes them known to us. He convicts of sin and sets in our hearts the ache and longing for deliverance, and, "breathing where he listeth", in His own time brings us to the hour of rebirth.⁸ I have always noticed in East Africa a healthy dependence upon the initiative of God in conversion, which we self-made Christians of the West would do well to recover. One young student, for example, describing how he had entered into Christ, said:

¹ *Romans* iii. 24 (In Basic English).

² The phrase is J. A. T. Robinson's from *The Body* (S.C.M. Press) p. 42.

³ *St. John* xv. 11; *Hebrews* xii. 2.

⁴ *Philippians* iv. 13; *II Corinthians* xii. 9.

⁵ *St. John* xv. 27; *II Thessalonians* iii. 16.

⁶ *Galatians* iv. 6; *Romans* viii. 34; *Hebrews* vii. 25.

⁷ *St. John* xv. 5.

⁸ *St. John* iii. 8 R.M.V.

"At the end of that service I told God that I was ready to be saved, and three days later He did it." Jesus could not make us more completely one with Himself than He does by imparting to us His very Spirit. By this "supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" all of Jesus is implanted in us, and our whole being is incorporated in Him. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me and I in you."¹ Nothing less than this is Christianity. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his."²

But on our side it is faith which unites us with Christ. On this grand theme libraries of books have been written, and only one point needs to be stressed in this context. We shall never do justice to the biblical doctrine of faith unless we remember at all times that faith in Christ is a relationship. Again and again in the miracles of healing the Lord so framed His action that the patient was confronted with a sudden demand to stake everything on the personality of Jesus. And that glorious aliveness of His evoked trust against all reason and all the evidence. "Stretch forth thy hand," He ordered the man with the withered arm. "Go thy way; thy son liveth," He said to the nobleman who had come to fetch him. In each case we can sense the silent pause when doubting expostulation and trustful obedience hung in the balance; we can imagine the questioning eyes fixed on the calm and challenging gaze of Christ. And then—the faith which is commitment. It is the old "I—Thou" question and call of God. Adam, who would not trust in the matter of a tree is tested again, but this time it is a pair of human eyes which claim his confidence. Sometimes Jesus seems to have been dissatisfied with the quality of a faith which, while sufficient for healing, was not personal enough for discipleship. So He hunts down the man He has healed at Bethesda, and goes in search of the man born blind, in order that, by a second encounter, He may attach them to Himself.³

It is this personal element in faith which makes nonsense of our too systematized evangels. Many will say "in that

¹ *St. John* xiv. 20. ² *Romans* viii. 9. ³ *St. John* v. 13-15; ix. 35-38.

day" that they believed every article of the creeds and went through all the motions of religious experience, yet may He even so profess unto them, "I never *knew* you". And on the other hand there are many very queer fish, in the estimate of orthodoxy, who are none the less well and truly caught in the draw-net of the personality of Jesus. Robert Louis Stevenson in his fable, *Faith, Half-Faith and No Faith at All*, tells of a priest, a virtuous person and an old rover with his axe, who went together on a pilgrimage. The priest made miracles the ground of his faith and was several times severely shaken; but the virtuous person encouraged him to go on, in the metaphysical assurance that Right shall prevail. "At last one came running, and told them all was lost: that the powers of darkness had besieged the Heavenly Mansions, that Odin was to die, and evil triumph. 'I have been grossly deceived,' cried the virtuous person. 'All is now lost,' said the priest. 'I wonder if it is too late to make it up with the Devil?' said the virtuous person. 'Oh, I hope not,' said the priest, 'and at any rate we can but try. But what are you doing with your axe?' says he to the rover. 'I am off to die with Odin,' says the rover."

Sooner or later such personal faith in Jesus Christ includes repentance. In what we may call the classical pattern of religious experience repentance precedes faith. But in many men of all periods, and particularly of our own non-responsible age, real repentance becomes possible only as faith in Christ deepens into a fuller understanding of the Cross. It matters little which comes first, for repentance and faith are the left foot, right foot of the Christian's march to God. For the essence of repentance is not a feeling of guilt or sorrow about particular sins, though that may be present to an intense degree, but a *metanoia*, a changing of the centre. It means to swing the whole person away from the old direction of self-assertion and independence and to face towards God as seen in Christ. And the Cross is God's way *par excellence* of breaking down the proud antagonism of Man and drawing him into a faith-relationship with his Saviour. "For those who received him,

who believed on his name, faith acquired a scope undreamed of before; it signified the unique attachment which gathered round the person of Jesus—a human trust, in its purity and intensity such as no other man ever awakened, which grew into and identified itself with its possessor's belief in God, transforming the latter in doing so, and which drew the whole being of the believer into the life and will of the Master."¹

The Apostles might well have asked what was to replace the dynamic of this bodily presence of their Master as they went out after his Ascension to carry the Gospel to the uttermost part of the earth. That they did not in fact ask this question is proof of their overwhelming sense of his Presence with them and His Spirit within them which gave them confidence that He could still be visible in them, his Body. "Look on us," said Peter to the lame man; the man saw Christ in them, and faith was kindled in the old way. "That which we have heard," said the witnesses, "that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled . . . declare we unto you also that ye also may have fellowship with us."² There were only two ways at their disposal by which they could make men see Jesus: they could tell the stories and they could live the life. It was by heralds and witnesses that men were to be brought to faith; only after that would they require teachers and pastors. And so the stories were told, and in them the living Christ made Himself known to men, just as He does still to us in the later editions of the stories which we call the Gospels.

In her most sensitive picture of the first-century Church, *The Blood of the Martyrs*, Miss Naomi Mitchison shows what the dawning of faith must have meant to a few of the tens of thousands of slaves who were haled in from every corner of the Empire to be used up and cast aside by the tyrannous Thing which was Rome. Niger, the litter-bearer, a captive from Morocco, is little more than a terrified, whipped brute

¹ *Great Christian Doctrines: Faith*, J. Hastings (ed.) (T. and T. Clarke), p. 156.

² *I John* i. 1-3.

when he first meets kindness in one of the kitchen slaves, the Jew Josias. "He said to Niger: 'I'll tell you a story,' and sat down on the edge of the litter. Niger was now beaming with pleasure. He loved being told stories. . . . But no one had told him a story since he had been a slave. Josias spoke slowly, using simple words. . . . He told the story of Jesus-bar-Joseph, who was also the Christ, but that wouldn't mean anything to Niger. After about an hour they heard the others coming out. . . . Niger who had been quite silent, so silent that Josias wondered sometimes if he was really listening, said: 'Next time—tell me more'."

Later on Niger begins joining in the secret meetings. "For a long time he was suspicious of the rest of the congregation; he could not believe they might not suddenly turn against him. But he trusted Josias. It only came to him gradually that there was comfort and joy in the Church; he went there at first just to hear more stories, and because it was warm and dark and he felt safe and because Josias wanted him to come. But gradually it began to sink into him; he began to feel that he was part of something which was bringing back his manhood to him. . . . After his baptism he came whenever he possibly could, but that was not always . . . sometimes he had to go for weeks without once getting the comfort of the love-feast. But he repeated the prayer to himself and told himself again all he had heard, over and over, all the stories."¹

I have quoted at some length from this novel because the passage shows also how the faith relationship of the individual to Jesus leads him at once into the life of fellowship of the new Community. It is in the men and women of the Church, as well as in their stories, that Christ reveals Himself and reaches out to save. On the one hand we must never forget that faith is personal appropriation—"that I believe and take it"—and that the sinner, as Luther said, "must ply diligently the first personal pronoun". "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth

¹ *The Blood of the Martyrs*, Naomi Mitchison (Constable) pp. 147-148.

in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me.”¹ But on the other hand we must equally remember that to be in Christ is to be in the Church which is His Body. In the intensity of the mutual loyalty and forgiveness and caring of the Church we meet the love of Christ; in bearing one another’s burdens we fulfil His law, in humble service to the least of the brethren we serve our Lord, and in sinning against the brethren we sin against Christ.² Through the Church the solidarity of our human nature, which in our fallen Manhood has involved us so inextricably in sin, is sanctified by Christ and transformed into a new solidarity of grace, so that our restored Manhood, weak though we are in isolation, involves us now in all the faith and hope and charity of all the generations of the People of God.

If Baptism is the sacrament of our incorporation into Christ, the New Man, it is also that of our immersion into the community of the new Mankind. If in the Lord’s Supper we eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man in order to abide in Him and He in us;³ we are also partaking of the one Loaf that we being many may be one loaf, one body—His Body.⁴ And if the selfhood of each of us is something that extends beyond our individuality into the network of inter-relations in which we are enmeshed, then we have no spiritual life of our own apart from that branching organism of inter-penetrating Christian lives which is itself the extension of the Self-hood of Christ. “I am the Vine; ye are the branches.”

The branches *are* the Vine, yet are clearly differentiated from it. So the Church *is* the Body of Christ, yet can never be identified with Christ. Paul, whose doctrine of the Body of Christ was so central to his thought, is careful to define this distinction by saying that we are the Body of Christ, and Christ is the Head. In order to understand this we

¹ *Galatians* ii. 20.

² *St. Matthew* xxv. 40; *I Peter* v. 5; *I Corinthians* viii. 12; xii. 27.

³ *St. John* vi. 53–56.

⁴ *I Corinthians* x. 17.

need to remember that in Hebrew thought the word "head" often signifies the original source from which something derives its being. So for Paul the head is that from which all the form and function and fitness of the body are derived;¹ it is the "saviour" of the body.² We would express the same concept by saying that a cell is the natural development in extension, or the fulfilment, of its nucleus. This idea of the full embodiment of an original impulse, or the development in extension of a primary entity, is described by the biblical word "fulness" or fulfilment. The body is therefore the "fulness" of the head. So we can see why Paul regarded woman, on the basis of the biblical story of her origin, as the "development in extension", or fulfilment, of man, and so called the husband "the head of the wife".³ In the same way Christ Himself was the embodiment or "fulness" of God,⁴ and the Church is the fulness of Christ; it is the Body of Christ, as Head, and the Bride of Christ, as Husband.⁵ Because Christ dwells in the heart of each believer this idea of embodying, or being filled out from, Christ the Head is applied to the individual relationship also, though never in isolation from the context of the whole redeemed community.⁶ The individual's growth to maturity is always valued as contributing to the ultimate expression of the perfect Manhood of Christ in a renewed humanity.⁷

For all these metaphors—the branches spreading from the stem, the body developing from and expressing the head, the building rising from the one foundation course—point back to the fundamental biblical conception of the nature of All Man in the providence of God. Man is a single organism in which we are all involved. Fallen humanity is "the body of sin" of which Adam is the head, an organism that is still growing and branching, working out through history the innate disobedience which leads on to self-destruction. But in the midst of all that has come the Second Man; willingly

¹ *Colossians* ii. 19.

² *Ephesians* v. 23.

³ *Ephesians* v. 23.

⁴ *Colossians* i. 19; ii. 9.

⁵ *Ephesians* i. 22, 23; v. 25-27.

⁶ *I Corinthians* xi. 3; *Ephesians* iii. 17-19.

⁷ *Ephesians* iv. 12-16.

involved in the old Man for our sakes, He "died out" of the body of sin and became a new Head in order to draw men out of the old organism into Himself, so that in the end all things in heaven and earth might be "gathered together under a new headship" in Christ.¹ We therefore, incorporated one by one into Him by grace, can escape from the determinism of the old Man, and, being born again into a new race, can put on the New Man and become the Body of Christ.²

Though Man was made originally in the likeness of God he produced a posterity "in his own likeness after his image".³ But those who having been in Adam are grafted into Christ have the image of God renewed in them. "As we have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly."⁴ As we abide in Him and He in us we are slowly transfigured into that image "from glory to glory". There are moments when a Christian's whole being is fused into an agonizing flame of desire to enter completely into that likeness and to be made utterly one with the Beloved Lord. "It is good for us to be here," we cry; and some of us seem to be called to build their tabernacles, their "willow cabin" of love, up there on the bare slopes of the mountain of God, even in the cloud of Unknowing. But for most of us the word is, Not Yet. It is a word which calls us back into the valley: "But now we see not yet all things subjected to him".⁵ But it is a word of promise too: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is".⁶ Until then we go back with Him into the world. It is not for us to know the times or seasons of the final restoration of all things, and the End, though certain, is not in our hands.⁷ "To-morrow may be the day of judgment. If it is we shall gladly give up working for a better future, but not before."⁸ For whether the task be

¹ Ephesians i. 10.

² Romans vi. 6; Ephesians iv. 22-24.

³ Genesis v. 1, 3.

⁴ I Corinthians xv. 49 R.V.M.

⁵ Hebrews ii. 8.

⁶ I John iii. 2.

⁷ Acts i. 6, 7.

⁸ *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (S.C.M. Press) p. 26.

long or short, it will seem to us but a few days for the love we have to the Lord. In the meantime we stand with Him in the world, involved in His involvement, and yet free in His freedom. We, and He, belong to the race of men who, like the three Hebrew children, have "fallen down bound *into the midst*" of the inferno of the world's self-destruction. There we must remain until the Principalities and Powers give us up. But though we are still in the midst we are no longer in bonds, and the Prince of this world is "astonied" at our freedom. "He spake and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking *in the midst* of the fire, and they have no hurt: and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods."¹

¹ *Daniel* iii. 24, 25.

VI

INTO ALL THE WORLD

“**B**UT he hasn’t got anything on!” cried the child in the story of the King’s New Clothes. The impostor tailor had said that the royal garments would be invisible to all knaves and fools. So neither the shivering king himself nor any of his fawning courtiers dared admit that he could not see them; even the crowd acquiesced in the mystery until the child spoke out the naked truth.

It is a terrible moment for the Christian when that happens to him. Our hearts are stirred by the great gospel proclamation of the riches of our salvation, we are thrilled by the unbelievable heights of our calling in Christ, when suddenly the chill blast of reality compels us to face ourselves honestly. “Do I look like a new Man? Could anyone say of me, There is a new creation?” When pressed to demonstrate wherein our faith has made us different from the rest of men we fall back on metaphysical assertions which leave the world unconvinced for want of evidence. Friedrich Nietzsche, the philosopher who rejected Christianity as a failure, said: “His disciples would have to look more saved if I am to believe in their Saviour”.

Defeated individually we fall back upon our membership of the Church. This is the City of God and the Body of Christ; though we are sinful yet She is holy; though we falter Her Faith upholds us. But again truth challenges our fine phrases. Our doctrine of the Church sounds hollow when we see ourselves as others see us. For our heavy institutionalism looks worldly, so does our defensive self-interest, our Christianity-by-committee, and the triviality of our concerns. Is our new Israel faring any better than the old?

Or must we not admit that in our case too the promises are being fulfilled only in a faithful Remnant? Reinold von Thadden, leader of the great Church convention movement in post-war Germany, who more than most Christians has a right to speak, has voiced the reproach of the multitudes who looked to the Church with a great hope and went away disappointed: "We came, but the Church was not there, for the Church we met was not the Church we were looking for; it was the Church of the past, the Church of restoration, the Church in complete retreat from the real battlefield of our time".¹

Nothing confronts the Christian with more painful urgency than this dilemma between promise and fulfilment, between biblical statement and visible fact. There are two dishonest ways of escape available to us if we will take them. On the one hand we can lower the standard of the promises. "Not for the whole man," we say, "but only for the soul. Not for this world but only in the next; not immediate but only gradual; not with certainty but only in hope. And, no doubt, these descriptions apply to the ideal Church beyond time, certainly not to the church where I attend matins at 11.0. Anyway, it is a wonderful Mystery, and appearances have nothing to do with it." On the other hand we can assert more and more loudly that we are what we do not appear to be. Misinterpreting St. Paul, we reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin against all the evidence, until we reach the verge of nervous breakdown. "Like a mighty army," we proclaim, "goes the Church of God, and if you don't believe it we'll get a new processional cross to prove it."

But neither of these two ways of escape can lead us anywhere, for, as Carlyle said, "Till cant cease, nothing else can begin". The dilemma presses upon us still so that we are hemmed in, like the children of Israel, between the Egyptian devil and the deep sea. And to us, as to them, comes the

¹ An address given by Reinold von Thadden at the I.M.C. Conference at Willingen included in *Missions under the Cross*, ed. Norman Goodall (Edinburgh House Press for the International Missionary Council) p. 47.

impossible Word of the Lord: *Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.* We stand afraid, each of us isolated in his defeat, confronted by the demand of Christ and the crying need of a world without God, and in our moment of truth we whisper to ourselves: *The Word of God tells me I am this and I know I am not. It says the Church is all that, and I know we are not.* But why does each of us only say these things to himself? The way forward is the way to someone else. When one Christian goes to his brother in Christ and makes that double confession in the full depth of its meaning, and is answered by a like confession, then as they forgive one another in the name of Christ, the waters are divided and the Way opens before them.

A young African student from Northern Rhodesia was studying for lay-readership in a college in Uganda. During his long vacation he travelled home to see his mother, twelve days by bus and lorry and canoe. On the return journey his bus broke down somewhere in the middle of Tanganyika, and the passengers were turned out to wait for five hours at the side of the road. The boy, however, set off into the bush, following a track until he came upon a half-deserted village. He had no idea what was the local language, or the name of the tribe, but Swahili serves for rough and ready communication all over East Africa, so he asked the first man he met if there were any Christians there. The man did not know what he was talking about. But a little further on when he asked again a lad suggested that he might mean the old woman who lived at the far side of the village; she had a book she sometimes read. So the boy from Rhodesia went on to the hut they showed him, and as he drew near he began singing a well-known hymn. An old woman came to the door and blinked at him in the sunlight. "Where did you hear that tune?" she asked. "I am a Christian," he replied. She caught him, then, and pulled him into the dark hut, weeping; and from a cloth she unwrapped a tattered Bible and showed it to him. After they had talked awhile he asked how she had become a Christian. Years before she had gone a great way to live with

her son in a distant area, and there she had found a Church and heard the teaching and been baptized. But after her son had moved again to work in the town she had come back to her own village. "And are there no other Christians here?" asked the Rhodesian. She shook her head.

"What!" he cried. "Have you been here these ten years and told no one of Jesus?"

"Oh yes," she answered, "I began to tell them, and one man believed and we used to meet together and others were interested. But then he started drinking too much beer and stopped coming with me. And since then I have been alone."

"Does he live here still?" asked the boy.

"Yes."

"Then let us go together and visit him."

So the two of them went and found the man. And after a while he went back with them to the woman's hut. And all that afternoon those three talked together and read from the Bible and prayed. In the evening they walked back with the boy to his bus, and as they said goodbye the man was promising to bring his wife next day to have a talk with the old woman.

Man is made for mutuality and involvement, and no one can live the life that is in Christ except by sharing it. Like a peal of bells the words "one another" ring through the pages of the New Testament. "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet."¹ "Confess therefore your sins one to another and pray one for another."² "Forbearing one another and forgiving each other. . . . Teaching and admonishing one another."³ "Comfort one another and build each other up."⁴ "Bear ye one another's burdens."⁵ "Love one another even as I have loved you."⁶

Such words do not describe a state of perfection, for if we had already attained that there would be no need for confession or forbearance or admonition. But they do describe something living and moving. For in this interchange of love and concern nothing is static. If there has been failure it is known

¹ *St. John* xiii. 14.

² *James* v. 16.

³ *Colossians* iii. 13, 16.

⁴ *I Thessalonians* v. 11 R.V.M.

⁵ *Galatians* vi. 2.

⁶ *St. John* xv. 12.

to friends and forgiven; the partially blind have others' eyes to guide them forward, the timid are encouraged and the stale renewed. Individual Christianity is bound to stagnate; but in this reciprocal give and take of faith there is the flow of "living water". Those who have this flow of life in their relationship with one another, though they are not yet made perfect are recognisably a new kind of Man. We can only be the Body of Christ by perpetually becoming the Body of Christ. Like a waterfall, we are there because we are going there.

In this life of deep togetherness in Christ we must learn to accept the way of Truth in Fellowship. We may call this "Openness", and it means making our Confession incarnate. It is not mainly a matter of speaking, but a way of living, as of one who says: I am a sinner, but Christ has died for me and my brethren have forgiven me; the strain of pretending is gone for ever.

Then again we must learn the way of Flexibility in Fellowship. We may call this, "Brokenness". It means that all life is lived at the foot of the Cross. Having knelt there first to receive Christ's pardon we do not straighten up again, but remain what Rilke called "the deeply-kneeling man". The rigidity of self-will is surrendered, both towards God and towards our fellows. It means making our Penitence incarnate.

And then we must find the joy of Self-Oblation in Fellowship. To offer myself is good, but to be a part of the offering of a community is far better. We may call this "Givenness". Our everyday involvement in one another's lives, the comfort and the strain of it, is being perpetually offered up to God. It is in fact making our Worship incarnate. My job and my brother's job are all the time being laid on the Altar, (how *can* we kneel beside a man in church with no desire to discover how he earns his daily bread?) and so is every act of service we can possibly do for one another.

Such life cannot be lived in isolation, neither can these things be real if the only togetherness is that of the parish church congregation at Sunday worship. To be in Christ is

to be, in one way or another, in the gathering together of two or three. Just as the clergyman's robes are a stylized version of what used to be the everyday clothes of ordinary men, so, in a sense, all liturgical worship should be a stylized version of the ordinary shared life—the forgiving one another and teaching one another and building each other up and praying for one another—of the many Christian families and groups and cells which link up on the Lord's Day to make a common offering of their experience in Christ and their involvement in the world. In the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans we see that the whole Christian community which is being addressed is made up of little groups of from two to seven or more, attached to different households, most of them probably as slaves. Grouped in their homes or in their places of employment, they told the stories of their Lord, and lived the life and died the death which turned the world upside down.

The secret of their overwhelming impact upon the old Roman world was that they were, as a whole, closer to Christ, to one another, and to their world than the Church has ever been since. They knew that they had ambassadorial responsibility before the world; even the simplest believer was commissioned to make disciples of all nations. But they did their work far less by preaching at their pagan neighbours than by living in the midst of them. "Go ye *into* all the world", were the terms of their brief, so in they went, and lived and witnessed and died with no time to spare for worrying over the techniques of their evangelism or the success of their mission.

Professor Ernest Wright has reminded us that those witnessing cells of the early Church were more concerned to *be* the Kingdom than to build the Kingdom in the world. "God was inaugurating his own Kingdom by his own methods, using, to be sure, the witness of the elect; but the ethics of the community had not the purpose of 'building the Kingdom'. It was rather considered as the obedient and normal life of a community that was 'in Christ'. It was

simply 'following Christ'." "The whole emphasis thus lies, not upon the community's task and ability to win the world to Christ, but upon the active work of the living God who accomplishes what men cannot, and who is and will be undefeated."¹

Today the Church suffers from having a pulpit-perspective of the world, which sets us, as Christians, apart from other men yet keeps us ever anxious about their response. We shall never again effectively proclaim the Gospel until we see mankind from the inside and give our witness with less concern for results. For at present we are far more baffled and strained than we should be by the simple fact that modern man does not experience his sense of need in spiritual terms at all. This is no doubt what Sir Oliver Lodge meant by his very superficial statement that modern man has no sense of sin.

In face of this situation we are tempted to make one or other of two mistakes.

On the one hand we may seize upon one of modern man's obvious needs or problems and cash in on it to present Christianity as the solution. "Turn to God and avoid the atom bomb." "Come to the Church and get an education." There is enough truth in such a presentation of Christ to make it a plausible and, up to a point, a successful evangel. We must not be too spiritually high-brow in this matter. We all came to Christ with mixed motives ourselves, for what we could get out of Him, just as the sick and the poor of Galilee did long ago. But while He healed and fed them He insisted that Man lives not by bread alone. In the last resort the Church which always presents God as the solution to men's problems and the answer to every need is preparing its own doom. Dietrich Bonhoeffer saw this with courageous clarity from his Nazi prison: "How wrong it is," he wrote, "to use God as a stop-gap for the incompleteness of our knowledge. For the frontiers of knowledge are inevitably being pushed back further and further, which means that He also is being

¹ *The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society*, G. E. Wright (S.C.M.P.) pp. 108, 129.

pushed back further and further, and is in more or less continuous retreat. We should find God in what we do know, not in what we don't; not in outstanding problems but in those we have already solved. . . . We must not wait until we are at the end of our tether. He must be found at the centre of life: in life and not only in death: in health and vigour and not only in suffering: in activity and not only in sin. Christ is the centre of life and in no sense did he come to answer our unsolved problems".¹

We debase the currency of our faith when we seek to present it, as is done in some periodicals, as the most colossal success story of all time, wherein every question has its answer, every problem its solution. For in real life questions do not always have answers, nor every problem its solution. The colour-question does not require an answer, but a new relationship; marriage problems do not need solutions, but new relationships. This means that people have to live their way through colour questions, they have to live in the midst of their marriage problems, they have to stand in the fiery furnace of their suffering—and that is where they find the Son of God standing already.

There is a second way in which we may mistakenly deal with the frustration of men's lack of a sense of their need for Christ. We may try to create an artificial sense of need, to insist that they can experience Christ only in our terms. Confronted with non-religious modern man, we say, First become religious in your thinking, then you may find Christ. Is not this exactly what St. Paul's opponents, the Judaizers, said about circumcision? No doubt a great deal of deep and true evangelism can still be done in the old terms. Men are widely aware of the sinfulness of self-centred living, and many still understand an appeal to get right with God. Yet we cannot avoid the fact that there are very large numbers of ordinary men in the world today—whether mass-man in the stereotyped, propaganda-ridden society of the world's industrial

¹ *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (S.C.M. Press) pp. 142, 143.

centres, or submerged-man in the starved and darkened life of the backward lands—who simply cannot understand the Gospel as long as we present it in our present terms. They do not feel a sense of need in spiritual terms at all. Must all men learn to speak *our* language before we can proclaim Christ to them?

As a missionary in Africa I have occasionally felt overwhelmed by the sheer gulf of ignorance separating me from the people who live and move and have their mysterious being all around me. That peasant walking down the hill, where is he going? What *do* men do at this time of the morning? I haven't an idea. What sort of scene has he just left at his home? What did he talk about last night, and what does he feel about his wife and children? What sort of things worry or amuse or excite him? Does he pray? and if so, what does he say or feel? and the cry, *I don't know*, is like an agony. How can I preach to him, shepherd him, bring Christ to him, whom I don't know?

And here in England sometimes, in the full flood of joyful worship, caught up in the glory of psalm or ancient prayer or hymn, have we not suddenly been struck cold and silenced with the thought: What *could* they make of this—those decent folk in the cinema queue, the workers who pour out through the factory gates, the tired men, who, just off night shift, are asleep now in bed? What contact have they got with this?

We do of course make our contacts one by one. We draw individuals out of the orbit of modern secularized living into the orbit of Christianity. We teach individuals to understand the language of the Authorized Version and the Prayer Book, and help them to focus their real interest upon some spare time work for the church. We accept as inevitable this pattern of divorcing a religious minority from the secular majority. Our gospel in effect is: "Come out of the land of Egypt". And all the time Christ is saying: "Go *in* and possess this land which the Lord thy God hath given thee".

For we may be sure that Christ is utterly undismayed at the state of the world. History may seem to have got out of

hand, but it has not got out of *His* hands. Christians may feel lost in a secularized society, but Christ will make Himself at home in it. He believes in getting into a situation, not escaping out of it. In one sense, He always has been in it, at least ever since that divine involvement which we call the Incarnation. And we Christians have to find the courage to let ourselves be involved lock, stock and barrel with Him in the religionlessness of the modern world. It is the story of the *Quo Vadis* once again: "Where are you going, Lord?" "I am going into the city to be crucified. Are you coming too?"

Exactly what that might mean is difficult to imagine or to think out. It would certainly be a fearfully costly experience, a falling into the ground and dying on the part of the Church as we know it, in order to bear fruit. The Dean of one of our ancient English cathedrals said in private conversation not very long ago: "I love more than I can say the regular round of worship in this old cathedral, with its history and its heritage of prayer. But some days I feel certain that Christ is calling me to give up the whole of it and go down into the poorest streets of this city and just live there an ordinary life with the rest of them. I haven't the youth or the courage to do that. But I know——", and here he waved his hand towards the cathedral tower, "all this has got to be split open from top to bottom before Christ can walk in the streets with the boys and girls of this city."

We need not be theatrical about this and strike attitudes. But possibly one of the most practical and creative disciplines that any incumbent could enter upon these days would be quietly to sit down and imagine how he would do his task in the parish with no church buildings whatsoever and a ban on all meetings of more than a dozen people. Then when he had solemnly drawn up his plans for such a situation, he should put the greater part of them into effect now in spite of the fact that he still has his church and his normal gathering of the whole congregation. If this were done many priests might begin for the first time really to trust their laity spiritually,

and the Christian groups which would begin to meet right down in the fabric of the secular world might come to be for the first time a witnessing and truly worshipping community.

The story is told of an Indian catechist at the end of the last century who was dismissed from the Church for some misdemeanour. Burdened with shame, knowing he would never again dare to preach, the man left the area and went to some far-off, non-Christian part where he settled down as a stranger and made his living as a potter. The Church never heard of him again and he died there. More recently it was decided to send a team of evangelists to that distant area. They rented a house and started to tell the stories of Christ. They were amazed when the crowd of villagers responded eagerly, exclaiming: "We know the man you are talking about; he lived here for years." "Oh no," said the preachers. "you don't understand. We are talking about Jesus Christ." "Well" answered the people, "he never told us his name. But the man you've described was our potter without a doubt."

That true story is a parable of what the Church has to do. There are areas of life in our generation where we can do little or no preaching, maybe out of an honest shame. But Christ is going into those areas and He calls His followers to go and live within that secular environment as men in Christ—"the faithful brethren *in Christ in Colossae*".¹

"It is only by living completely in this world that one learns to believe. . . . This is what I mean by 'worldliness'—taking life in one's stride, with all its duties and problems, its successes and failures, its experiences and helplessness. It is in such a life that we throw ourselves utterly in the arms of God and participate in his sufferings in the world and watch with Christ in Gethsemane. That is faith, that is *metanoia*, and that is what makes a man and a Christian."²

That way of living in Christ must be infinitely more obedient, more radical, more absolute than anything we are offering to the world today. It demands a quality of

¹ *Colossians* i. 2 (Greek).

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *op. cit.* p. 169.

fellowship among ourselves finer and deeper than what satisfies us at present. But it may be that when a generation has lived Christ in that sacrificial, secular, almost silent way, going into the religionless areas of our western society, as the pioneers of the fourth century went out into the desert, there will afterwards arise a Church which will be almost unrecognizable to us, but which will draw multitudes into manhood in Christ. So will Christ be formed in twentieth-century Man.

For when Christianity is lived out before their eyes by real men of like passions and problems as their own, the people of this generation do recognize that here is what they have been looking for, though they never suspected that their needs were religious. Of all the felt needs of modern Man the most clamant are the need for Rescue, the need for Manhood, and the need for Community.

Men may not have a sense of sin, as we understand it; but they feel caught. They want deliverance from frustration—"vanity" is the biblical word—from pointlessness, and from a gradual disintegration of their personal being, the slow, grinding processes of materialism, the tacit assumption by the powers-that-be—whether in Britain or Africa—that the proper end of Man is a higher standard of living. Modern man is sick of materialism; he wants to be rescued from soul-starvation, though he doesn't use the word soul. He wants to be lifted out of the grip of the Principalities and Powers, just like the pagan of the first century, only his demons are economic processes and the fate which we call history. Strangely enough modern man often has a much more Pauline understanding of sin than the preachers have who call him sinner.

A young Kikuyu university student with whom I was talking during the early days of the Kenya emergency was in a bitter mood of despair. "Isn't it the right of every young man to work for a future he believes in? But I can see no future, no way out of evil." He has found the way since then—not the way out but the way through, and is working steadily and hopefully on the staff of a Christian school in his

homeland. Another of his compatriots, speaking recently as a Christian to a great gathering of the loyal Kikuyu, said: "The great thing is that we *can* look forward to a new future."

Modern man, fighting a losing battle for personality against the slow tide of collectivism, recognizes, when he sees it, the quality of Manhood which Christ bestows on all who are made one with Himself.

Here and there over the world, in the very places where the folly and immaturity of men have wrought the greatest havoc, there arise the one or two who stand head and shoulders above their fellows because they have attained "unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."¹ When the Israeli army, after its victory over the Arabs, marched into Nazareth, they expected to find the same chaos as they had encountered elsewhere. There had, in fact, been the same collapse of morale and the breakdown of municipal government. But a young Arab clergyman had rallied the heads of other Christian Churches in the town and together they had taken over completely the whole structure of local control and restored morale. "A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."²

Again, and as a means to manhood, modern Man needs the life of togetherness which he finds only in Christ. To our undying shame men look today not to the Church for their fellowship, but to the club and the pub., and to that strangely solitary community of the radio and the television set, where one isolated man may laugh at a joke and know that all England opens her mouth with him in a vast guffaw. But yet it is true that where Christ gathers his two or three into deep and obedient love, the lonely and bitter and depersonalized folk of our time are drawn by His magnetism as of old. Reinold von Thadden has described the phenomenal meetings of the *Deutsche Evangelische Kirchentag* in Berlin when multitudes poured over from the eastern zone and returned thither daily

¹ *Ephesians* iv. 13.

² *Isaiah* xxxii. 2.

for a week. "When in Berlin," he says, "200,000 people gathered in the Olympic Stadium under a huge cross, the impossible came true: this enormous crowd of poor, uprooted, homeless and desperately lonely individuals became a community, a fellowship of faith, a fellowship of love. Everyone asked his neighbour: Who are you? Where do you come from? And when the thousands returned home, they went back into their old distressful and threatened conditions of living full of courage and confidence."¹

"Into all the world" Christ calls his people to follow him, to draw men back to Manhood by living and dying in their midst. Here are two women, one Chinese and one English, sharing a home in the midst of one of the New Villages of Malaya; they are the only Christians there, at first, and their dispensary allows almost no time for preaching; but they are there to live, maybe to die, in their togetherness in Christ.

Up the aisle of a north-country cathedral go two lads in overalls; they are carrying the Bread and the Wine for the Offertory now, but in half an hour they will be carrying the tools of their trade in the big mill where they are fellow-workers. Whatever is in their hands, it is all the same, for they are carrying Christ in their partnership of living witness. And when those hundred and fifty workers and business folk, students and housewives, go clattering down the aisle at the end of their Communion and out on to the wet pavements for another working day, that is when the Body of Christ is broken and given for the life of the world.

And over in the sweltering heat of West Africa are three agriculturists, of whom one is white, working together at the very grass-roots of peasant life; they have puzzled a number of their Christian friends who complain that they are doing no "spiritual" work at all. But they are treading the very paths along which ordinary pagan feet have to go about their daily work, and pagan eyes may begin to discern Who it is that walks beside them there.

Down and down lead the steps of Christ. A long way

¹ Reinold von Thadden, *op. cit.* p. 55.

down from the mountain top, down into all the world, down into the whole structure of our human involvement, redeeming our interdependence, cleansing our relationships, untangling the long, dark skeins of our history, down to the bottom of our human despair and Godlessness, down into the midst, between the two thieves. And sometimes He leads us down right out of sight.

In Communist China there is a certain province where all Christians were forbidden to practise their religion openly. In one town a man was giving a supper party, and one of the twenty guests, who had been warned what to expect, later came out of China and told what he saw. There were standing here and there on the table numbers of small comfit-dishes of sweets and little dry biscuits. As the meal was progressing the host took one of the biscuits casually and held it a moment before snapping it, as if by accident, between his fingers. A moment later, in the course of his conversation with his neighbour he said "I remember, some time ago . . ." and as he finished his story he ate the biscuit. And at the same time four or five other guests happened to have biscuits in their hands, and they also, in one way or another, said "I remember", and ate them. A little later in the meal the host held his cup in his hand; and the other Christians also took their cups unobtrusively, and all drank, saying "I remember". And He who was nameless that day was surely present in all the fulness of His unconquerable power and love.

Is He as present with us? If we would have it so we must go where He is, leaving the secure, closed-circle of the known, for the risk of the unforeseeable, limitless opportunity that awaits us in the midst of the world.

"That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment even so I do.

ARISE, LET US GO HENCE"

INDEX

- Anthony, Saint, 21
 Anxiety, 33-34, 36, 47
 Arnold, Matthew, 8
 "As in Adam," 51, 54
 Baptism, 46, 63
 Barth, Karl, 45, 46
 Blake, William, 26
 Body, 17-18, 43, 63-64
 Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, 14, 23, 34, 48,
 65, 74, 77
 Brunner, Emil, 12
 Buber, Martin, 37
 Carlyle, Thomas, 68
 Church, 56-57, 62-64, 67-69, 72-
 73
 Covenant, 42-43, 55-56
 Creaturehood, 12, 32-33, 47-48
 Cross, The, 52-54, 60
 Culture, 23, 39, 46, 47
 Dixon, W. Macneile, 9, 15, 30
 Dodd, C. H., 44
 Donne, John, 23, 55
 Eichrodt, Walther, 10, 13, 28, 35
 Eliot, T. S., 15, 27, 28
 Faith, 59-61
 Fall of Man, 29-31
 Folly, 34
 Forgiveness, 53
 Guilt, 36
 Head, Christ as, 43, 54, 56, 64-65
 History, 24, 27-28, 39, 54
 Hodgson, Leonard, 51
 Humanity, Man's loss of, 31-32,
 39-41, 78-79
 Identification, 45-46, 49, 52-53,
 57-58
 Image of God, 10-13, 41, 48, 65
 Individualism, 12-13, 20-21, 25-28,
 40, 49
 Insignificance of Man, 8-9, 15-16
 Interdependence and Mutuality, 22-
 23, 39, 49-50, 70-72
 Irenaeus, 44, 45, 48
 Israel, 42-43, 56, 67
 Johnson, James Weldon, 11
 Jung, Carl, 36
 Kirkegaard, Sören, 25
 Köhler, L., 21
 Law, 35-36, 47
 Lawrence, D. H., 40
 Lewis, C. S., 37
 Mitchison, Naomi, 61-62
 Morgan, Charles, 7, 40
 Nationality, 24, 39, 47
 Nature, Man's relation to, 8, 13-15,
 18-19, 36-37, 51
 Newman, Cardinal J., 16
 Niebuhr, Reinold, 33
 Nietzsche, Friedrich, 67
 Peace, 22, 35, 43, 50, 55-56
 Pride, 32-33
 Repentance, 46, 60
 Responsibility, 11-13, 48
 Robinson, J. A. T., 13, 46
 Rupp, Gordon, 39, 54
 Sexuality, 21-22, 38
 Society, 22-23, 39
 "Son of Man," 44-45
 Soul and Body, 19-20, 38
 Stevenson, R. L., 60
 Tennyson, Alfred, Lord, 18
 Tertullian, 34
 Thadden, Reinold von, 68, 80
 Torah, 35, 42, 47
 Transfiguration, 51-52
 Transgression, 32-33
 Uniqueness of Man, 8-10, 12-13,
 15, 26
 Wright, G. Ernest, 21, 22, 30, 31,
 38, 73